

Pt 11 James Series (Faith Made Perfect) – Warning of Worldliness

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney 04-25-2018

± James 4:1-6

1 From whence *come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

As we begin Chapter 4 of the Book of James we find yet another very direct interrogation from Brother James. He doesn't have time to beat around the bush so he's not even trying to spare any feelings, he just makes very strong and demanding statements and questions. This is another test of genuine faith.

We've talked all along in this study about these things that James writes about is a challenge for us to examine our own faith. Is our faith real, or is it pretend? In other words; is the faith we claim to have genuine living faith or is it dead faith?.

So, he begins by asking two questions: 1 *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*

It is hard to figure out what kind of disputes these people are having. Some Bible commentators believe it was disputes and fighting that broke out among the Jews which caused the Romans to overthrow them, and some believe James is just making a general statement of various quarrels and fighting among the newly converted Christians.

I can't say for sure the specific disputes they are having but he uses some pretty strong words; "**wars**," and "**fightings**." Wars seems to be some pretty harsh problems or ongoing battles between people. Fightings indicates that they are always in a state of arguing, strife, and maybe even physical altercations.

It sounds like much the same problems that the Church at Corinth was having. Paul in his writing to them says this: **1 Corinthians 3:1-3** *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

One of the things that we have to be careful of as Church members, is the fact that we are a type of a family. Just as with families sometimes we can get on each other's nerves. This often leads to inner quarrels and arguing. As brothers and sisters in Christ we too can find ourselves this way. So, we have to guard against it.

In that same verse James asks another question which is really a statement: ...*come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* We preached an entire message on the sin of lust just this past Sunday night.

We mentioned how the sin of lust causes us to war within our own members. But, I think when James uses the word "members," here, he is referring to the whole body of the Church – the membership.

Then he starts describing the reasons for their misery:

2 *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

Ye lust, and have not: - as we said in Sunday night's message; people lust for different things; money, power, position, food, sex, etc. Men lust, long, crave, and desire these things and they want to possess them and they strive to get them but cannot obtain, so they, as James says, "**have not**." This leaves them miserable and in a constant state of feeling inadequate or deprived.

Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain – Notice the very harsh words James is using; **lust, kill, fight, war**, these are strong descriptions of what men do when they cannot get what they want. There are thousands of men sitting on death row right now because they desired to have something that was not theirs, so they killed to try and get it.

Man without Christ has an animal like behavior. If you've ever watched dogs fight over table scraps you know what I'm talking about. An animal's basic instinct is to survive by getting what they want no matter what they have to do to get it. If it means killing to get it then they kill.

ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. - Right away you may think, "hmm, that's weird. Is he saying if we ask God for these things that we are fighting over and killing over that he will give them to us? If I want a new Rolex instead of stealing it I can just pray and ask God for it and he will give me one?"

Oh, no my friend, that is not what James is implying. You see, most men don't realize it but when they **war, battle, fight, and kill**, they aren't doing it because of an object like a watch, car, gun, money, etc., they are doing it to try and **find peace, happiness, love, joy, and contentment**. They think if they get those shiny, expensive things that they will get peace, happiness, love, joy, and contentment – but we can never find it through things, we can only find it through the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, when James says "**ye have not, because ye ask not**," he means you are not asking God for what you truly want and that is; **peace, happiness, love, joy, contentment**. We know that is what he means because he says so in the next verse:

3 *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

Most people ask amiss – the word "**amiss**" means "**evil, greedy, morally bad**."

Boy, this sure blows that "**name it and claim it**" crowd right out of the water.

"You want a new car? Ask the Lord for it!" "You want the finer things in life, pray and ask the Lord to give them to you!" – Wow, you will hear such claims coming from those charlatan's on the Daystar Television Network, or Trinity Broadcasting Network. Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Joseph Prince, Andrew Wommack, Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, and the list goes on and on.

They will use such verses as **Matthew 7:7-8** *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

Then they will run to **1 John 5:14-15** And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

And they claim that these verses are stating that God will give you anything that you ask for because it is His will that we have them.

Listen, that is not what these verses are implying at all. God is not standing around with a pen and paper ready to right down your wish list.

- When James says “**ye ask amiss**,”
- When Jesus says, “**ask and it shall be given you**,”
- When John says, “**ask anything**”

These are all as John also says “**according to his will**.”

God is NEVER going to give you things that you lust after. That’s why James went on to say in **verse 3** ...**ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts**.

- Instead of asking for peace they are asking for money.
- Instead of asking for happiness they are asking for a new house.
- Instead of asking for love they are asking to have a sexual relationship.
- Instead of asking for joy they are asking for drugs, or alcohol.
- Instead of asking for contentment they are asking for popularity or fame.

The things that we are to ask for are spiritual things, things that are approved by God and are God’s will.

We see this same teaching over in the Book of: **Galatians 5:16-26**

16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*

19 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*

20 *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,*

21 *Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

23 *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

24 *And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

26 *Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*

Did you see the two comparison lists that Paul gives?

Flesh = Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings.

Spirit = love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Big difference between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit. God will never give you the works of the flesh, doesn’t matter how many times you ask him to.

4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

Then James gets to the reason some are like this. It is because they are friends with the world. They love the world. And I think that is the whole point James is trying to make. We cannot be friends with and be in love with the world and love the world’s things and be friends with and love God too.

The Apostle John warns of the same thing in his Epistle **1 John 2:15-17** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

James says that those who are friends with the world are enemies of God. It means you are committing acts of war against God. That’s what enemies do, they go to war. The last thing you want to be is an enemy and go to war against God because you will lose and lose dearly. Remember what the Hebrew writer said:

Hebrews 10:31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Then James asks yet another question: **5** *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*

This verse seems to give a lot of people problems. For one, it appears that James is quoting a passage of Scripture because he makes that statement, “**Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain**” and so people scramble around trying to find some Old Testament text that says that, maybe in the Psalms or Proverbs, but you won’t find it. So, I think James is just making a general statement that claims that this teaching is found in Scripture. If you go through and look at all the teaching the Bible has on this type of behavior you will find that Scripture backs it up.

Then, the other problem people have is with the other statement he makes: “**The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy**.” That in itself may seem a strange statement if you believe he is referring to God’s Spirit. This is where you want to make sure you are using a trusted translation of the Bible, which we all know is the Authorized King James Bible. Because if you are reading this verse out of the New King James, or the CEV, ERV, EHV, HCSB, ICB, ISV, TLB, NASB, NCV, NLV, NMB, all of those versions put a capital S on the word spirit here indicating that it is supposed to be the Holy Spirit. Wow, if that’s the case we should be very scared. Because if the Holy Spirit is lusting to envy inside of us we are in REAL BIG TROUBLE!

But, no, the Authorized King James Bible got it right again with the lower case “s”. Because there is no way James is referring to the Holy Spirit, he is referring to the spirit of man that dwells in us. Our carnal, fleshly spirit is what causes us to “**lusteth to envy**.”

6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

God giveth more grace. Thank God for that! If not for the grace of God we would destroy our own selves! He also states the fact that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Friends, we need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version