

James 4:1–10

- 1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?
- 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.
- 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
- 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?
- 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”
- 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
- 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.
- 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Wars without and Wars within
James 4:1-10

INTRO:

Chapter three of James is about wisdom which is from below and wisdom which is from above. The application of wisdom from above must be lived out among the people of God. To facilitate this James asked a diagnostic question and described the problem and then he prescribed a solution.

I. The Question (v. 1-5)

II Solution (v.6-10)

I. The Question (v. 1-5)

James 4:1-3 *“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”*

A. James wrote the paragraph on wisdom which is from above with a specific application in mind. We see this application when we read his question in **4:1**.

“Where do wars and fights come from among you?”

Why are always fighting with one another? James is not speaking of a hypothetical situation. In his unique style starts meddling in their lives.

B. Conflicts raged in the church. They did not involve doctrine or evangelism, the conflict was over choices hinging on personal desires.

“Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?”

This quest demands a positive answer. The problem was their personal desires (as distinguished from God’s desires). In short, the external conflict was because there was a war going on inside of them.

C. Their priorities spawned awful behavior.

“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war.”

These are very strong words. Because this is happening in the church, it must be figurative. It was evil in the extreme. They hated one another, they wanted what the others had. They could not have it legitimately so they fought and sought to hurt one another. Do you remember what James wrote in **3:16-17**?

“For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

D. They looked to the methodology of this preset evil world to get what they wanted, but they did not use God’s provision.

“Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, [in order] that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

Problem #1: they didn’t pray at all. I do not want to put us on a guilt trip about our prayerlessness. Suffice it to say, we must commit ourselves to praying as much as possible and for all things. Problem #2: when they did pray they prayed with the wrong motive. If we pray just to have things we want, we will not have them.

E. James’ summary cuts to the bone.

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?”

The problem is spiritual adultery. We are espoused to Christ. When we love the world more than we love God, we are unfaithful believers. The statement here is not a quote from any verse we have, but it summarizes well the repeated teaching of the Bible.

Galatians 5:16-17 says,

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

II. Solution (v.6-10)

James 4:6 ***“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”***

A. Once the readers understood where they were, they needed to find the way back. It started by recognizing God provides the ability to return, ***“He gives more grace.”*** Their sin of worldliness did not cancel their salvation. God gives favor to help us overcome our sin.

B. He also gave us direction.

“Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble’”

James quotes from the LXX of **Proverbs 3:34**. God will help us if we recognize our sin and submit to Him.

C. James fleshes out this direction with several verbs. First, submit to God resist the devil.

“Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

The most visible evidence of our salvation is our desire to submit to God. If we want victory over Satan, we must first submit to God. Only then can we resist the Devil and have him flee us.

D. Second, they must ***“Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”*** This is using **1 John 1:9** and putting off the Old Man and putting on the New Man (**Colossians 3:6-10**).

E. Third, we need to mourn our sin.

“Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.”

James is not talking about a demonstration emotionally. He uses the cultural evidences of grief to say we need to grieve for our worldliness. We need to repent of our sins before God. Our repentance does not earn our forgiveness, yet because we love God we seek it!

F. Finally, they need to let God have His way in their lives.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

Trust God with your life. Peter talked about this in 1 Peter 5:5-7.

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

How Do We Apply this?

1. The defining symptom of our loving the world more than we love God is our self-centeredness. If we do an honest self-examination of our lives, how do we do against the standard James prescribes?

2. Are we serious about being right with God? James is not suggesting some kind of penance to curry God’s favor. Rather he taught us to get serious in our repentance and returning to God.

Hymn #415 *He Giveth More Grace*