

James 4:1-6 (Teaching)

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[0 : 00] Morning. Good morning. We're back with the Book of James, moving right along through James. Starting the fourth chapter this morning, the number serves me right.

This takes last week due to a flat tire on the way here, so. We've been picking up in the first verse of chapter four here momentarily.

We finished up chapter three. Chapter three is kind of sort of known as the chapter of the tongue.

That's the main emphasis that's given there in chapter three.

And James talked about how the tongue can be and is used for evil. It's used for wickedness. And of course at the end of that chapter, it gives us examples of earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom, a wisdom that comes from above.

And, you know, for using that wisdom that we should be asking God for, according to James chapter one, we'll be using our tongue in the correct manner.

[1 : 19] And that's pretty much how chapter three ends. And we go on into chapter four, and James begins chapter four.

And this is a rough chapter. It's rough for Christians. That's something we've got to remember. James is writing to believers in Christ.

And I know I've said that over and over through this study. And if no other chapter, if no other verse is really in this book, emphasize that more, it's James chapter four, verses one through four.

You find fourteen references, and those four verses, you find fourteen references to ye or you or your. And who is the ye, you or your that he's referring to?

He's referring to the brethren that he's talking to in chapters one, chapters two. And chapters three. It's the same people he's referring to.

[2 : 18] So, it's believers in Christ. It's the church that he's writing to. And that's hard for us to accept. It's hard for us to swallow, because this chapter talks about enemies of God.

And it talks about, well, at the very beginning of this chapter, the very first verse, she says, from whence come the wars and fighting among you? There shouldn't be any wars and fighting among the Christians.

There shouldn't be any wars and fighting among the body of Christ, but there are. But remember, we've got to remember that he is writing to believers. We can't read this chapter and point our finger at the world, because James was pointing his finger at the church when he was writing this.

He was pointing his finger directly at fellow believers in Christ. We'll pick up in James chapter four, beginning at verse one. He says, from whence come wars and fighting among you?

Come they not hence even of your lust, the war in your members? So he has two questions here. Where do these wars and where do these fighting come from?

[3 : 25] And then he asks another question. Come they not hence even of your lust, that war in your members? They come from your own desires. We can go all the way back to James chapter one again, where he talks about sin, it begins in our hearts, it begins in us, it begins of our own lust and our own desires.

We can't blame the devil for our own desires. We can't blame them for our own sin. We can't point our finger at the devil or at demons or anything else and say the devil made me do it when it begins with us.

It begins in the south of us. But he asks the question, where do these wars and where do these fighting come from? Where do these disputes come from? And there's two different Greek words that are used here. The one for words is for wars is a word called polymous.

And that's talking about an ongoing campaign, an ongoing fight. We would talk about World War II going on for a few years or even World War I.

We're talking about something that lasts a long time. The second word that he uses is fighting. And that's a Greek word called maché. And that word is the one that talks about the individual battles within the war.

[4 : 45] We might fight for five years, but we might fight a hundred different battles in that five years, but it's all considered the same war. And he's saying, why are these long-going disputes happening among you?

And why are these tiny little battles, why are these little nitpicky things going on? But he answers them with another question. He says, do they not come?

He says, come they not hinge, which is the same as saying, do they not come? Even of your lusts that were in your members. They come from you as individuals, James is saying. They come from your lusts within your own hearts, your own individual hearts that were in your own individual members.

It's because of your desires. And you can actually go back to James chapter three, where he gives the warning about being not many masters, knowing this that we shall receive a greater condemnation.

And he's giving warning there. And this was one of the disputes that was going on. I want to teach. No, I want to teach. Well, I know more than you do. No, I know more than you do. I know this one and I know that one.

[5 : 53] I sat under this one and I sat under this one. And these were just the little fights that were turning into huge ongoing wars between church members.

And it shouldn't be that way. It shouldn't be that way in any individual church as far as a building is concerned. And it shouldn't be that way in the body of Christ worldwide. There should be no disputes among us.

But there are. There are. And unfortunately, I think that there always will be. And why is it though? James answers that. James answers that because of our own lust.

It's because of our own desires. It's because of things that begin in our own individual hearts. Verse two, he says, You lust and have not you kill and desire to have and cannot obtain you fight and war. Yet you have not because you ask not. You ask and receive not because you ask a miss that you may consume it upon your lusts.

Back to verse two, you lust and have not. In other words, you desire and you have not. It doesn't matter how much we desire these things.

[7 : 05] And James is saying here, remember, he said these wars and these fighting are coming of our own desires and our own lusts for things that are going to gratify us.

You know, and unfortunately, that's an attitude that a lot of church people have a lot of believers. A lot of believers. I won't even say church people because that includes lost people that enters the doors of the church house.

But this is the attitude of a lot of believers and Christ. And it shouldn't be our attitude, but it is that because of our lusts and we want to be gratified on in our means and in our time and our way.

We'll go to whatever links we have to will step on anybody's head that we have to will hurt anybody's feelings that we have to will do whatever we have to gratify our own lusts and our own desire.

He says you lust and have not even though you desire these things. You still don't have them. You're continuing on in this war that I'm talking about and you're creating even more battles within the war that I'm talking about.

[8 : 10] And he goes on. You kill and desire to have. Now, maybe he wasn't talking about physical murder. Maybe he wasn't talking about one person in the congregation strangling another one because there was a disagreement between the two of them.

But folks, we know from scripture that the tongue can cause us to murder. The tongue can cause us to kill someone not not physically, but to kill someone that can it can kill their their reputation.

It can kill their own desires for God. I mean, our tongue is a brutal weapon. We know that from chapter three of the book of James. John says in 1 John, he says, if you hate your brother, you have not the little Lord.

I mean, that's that's some brutal words in and of itself and James didn't even speak to those. That was John, the apostle of love that wrote the gospel of love. And he says that if we have hate in our heart, the love of God can't be within us.

We can't hate our brother and claim love for God. It's an impossibility according to scripture. But it says you kill and desire to have and cannot obtain.

[9 : 22] Why can't we be able to attain it? Well, he goes on into that. Let's keep going reading. You fight and war yet you have not because you ask not. You ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your own lust.

All this ties together versus to through versus three three through the end of verse three. They all tie together there. He says you desire that or you lust and have not you kill and desire to have. And you cannot obtain you fight and war yet you have not all these things are going on. All these fighting all these disputing all this tongue lashing all this backbiting is going on in the church. Insults are flying back and forth and yet you still don't have what you desire. That's what James is saying. It's doing you no good. It's doing us no good. And it's certainly not edifying the body of Christ when things like this go on.

And James is warning the believers here of these things. He says, yet you have not because you asked not because you asked not for what you're asking not.

[10 : 28] You're not asking the right one, the right person for these things. Who is the right person? That would be God. You ask God for these things and not.

Well, it goes on into verse three. You ask and receive not because you ask a mystery you may consume it upon your loss. Yeah, he asked and received not because he asked a miss.

What might be asked to me of a believer in Christ? What might be at I mean anything? So people people pray 13 when the Super Bowl.

That's just that's just an off the handle example or the World Series or the Stanley Cup or their nice car driver. To win the race. Why are you why would you ask God for something like that that they hit the lottery?

Why would you ask God for something like that that you can glory in that that you can glory that so and so one the race that you can glory this such and such team one such and such game that you can rub it in your co workers faces you can rub it in your family members faces you can rub it in other church members faces that they done that that's that's a good reminder.

[11 : 40] That's a dramatic example but it's an example nonetheless. You ask and receive not because you ask a mystery you may consume it upon your own loss but what the verse before that I'm sorry verse two says.

You fight and war you have not because you asked not something I'd like to address. That I feel like the church has been wrong about for a long time you all can agree to disagree or you can just outright disagree with me and that's fine.

But people have the attitude and it's the church's fault that they have this attitude that when they asked for something I'm not talking about legitimate things I'm asking or I'm talking about healing. For a family member or for sell or for maybe guidance or something along those lines something something that's actually going to help them out and they don't feel like God's answering that prayer they don't feel like they've got to help them in these things.

You know mama's still laying in the hospital bed dying or daddy did die or whatever the case is you know and the Bible says you have not because you asked not and that's what people will say and people develop a bitter or a negative attitude toward God toward God because they've been told all their life that no is an answer just like yes is.

[13 : 12] Folks if you really look at scripture that's really not the case. Paul has thrice three times to God he asked that God removed the thorn in his flesh.

And God did give him an answer yes but I don't feel like Paul felt like he got the answer that he was wanting he wanted that thorn removed did he not.

Therefore is no an answer of course no is an answer you asked me something and I give you a negative answer I give you a negative response no it's still an answer yes but how do we phrase it. I've been praying for years that God will do this for me and God will do that for me and God ain't answered that prayer that's exactly what we say. That's what you say that's what I say God still has an answer to that prayer.

Well if you truly believe that no is an answer why would you say God ain't answered that prayer. Our answers in our mindset as human beings are always affirmative to what we desire and what our lusts are and too often we match that word lust with a sexual desire and that's not what it always means.

[14:29] Anything that any type of desire that you have in your heart that's what you're a lust thing after. You look at Judas Iscariot in the scripture the man had a bad problem of lusting after money and he never got rid of that problem as far as I can tell in the scripture that never did leave him that lust that desire never left him.

His lust for money never left him. And that's what we get in the way too and we'll get into that here in the next few verses. Next couple of verses. But when our lusts and our desires become the focus of us what are we going to ask.

We're going to ask for things that we ask amiss that we can consume those things upon our own lusts our own desires. And when we consume those my example I was using were evident people's faces.

These are things that really don't matter as far as the kingdom of God goes as far as the furtherance of the kingdom of God goes or the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ goes. We ask these things that we may consume them upon our own love. But all people want to read there as you ask and receive not.

[15:50] And people will take that and they'll say it's cause you're not asking them faith. That's not what James says. James don't even mention faith here. James says you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your own lusts.

The adulterers and adulterers says no you not the friendship of the world is enmity with God. And whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

They're one of the hardest verses in all this scripture and all this passage of scripture to swallow. Why? Because he's referring to the church. He's referring to believers.

He's referring to those that have claimed the name of Jesus Christ. Those that have professed faith in Christ. That's whom he is writing to. He calls them adulterers and adulterers.

He's not talking about in the physical sense here. I've heard this preached. I've heard Aesermen preached using this verse. And people talking about physical adultery.

[16:55] Now I guess you could do that. Yes, but that's not what James is talking about. Therefore technically it's being taken out of context if that's done. He's talking about spiritual adultery here. He's talking about all throughout the Old Testament.

God refers to Israel as an imperialist, harsh woman. That's harsh words. But it was toward his own people. It was toward the apple of his eye. It was toward those that he had chosen.

That he had redeemed. That he had brought up out of the bondage of Egypt. He said that about them. Why would he say that? Or read the book of Hosea sometimes.

It gives you all kinds of examples. The exact same thing. It's spiritual adultery that James is talking about here. He's not just referring to the physical adulterers and adulteresses of the day.

He is talking about the church being spiritual adulterers to God. Why are we called the Bride of Christ? That means we've been set apart for Christ. That means that we are to be married to Christ.

[18:02] But when we get away from Christ, we go out with the world. That's why he gets into the whole friendship with the world. His enmity with God here. We go out and we flirt with the world.

We go out and we hold hands with the world. We go out and we smoke up on the world. We do all these things. Why would we do that? Well, a lot of people do it saying that they're doing that to further the gospel.

They say, I'm going to go out to the bars. And I'm going to go out to the bar. And I'm going to be a witness for Jesus Christ. You hang out the bars long enough. You'll be just as drunk as the people you're there with.

If not more so. I say, I'm going to go down here to the street corner at 2 a.m. and be a witness for Christ and the prostitutes. You hang out long enough on those street corners.

You're going to wind up in bed with one of those prostitutes. The world will rub off on us. The world will influence us. People say, I'm going to go to this party.

[19:02] I'm going to go to this concert. Some ungodly band or some ungodly artist. I'm going to be a witness for Christ. You stay outside the door and you be a witness for Christ.

You go inside there. You're going to just like the world that's in there. And the bottle says, friendship with the world is enmity with God. Therefore, whoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

And again, he is writing to believers. He's writing to believers. Talking about believers in Christ being friends with the world. I'm not saying if you got a job or you got family members that are lost

that you can't have any contact with them.

I'm not saying that, oh, how else are we going to get the gospel to them if we're not having contact with them? But you don't hang out the places they go to. You don't do the things that they do. Why is that?

Because we're to be a peculiar people. And we don't make ourselves peculiar. God makes us peculiar. The Holy Spirit of God that dwells within us, it will lead us in our lives.

[20 : 04] It will leave us in our speech. And that's what makes us peculiar because we're not like everybody else that's around us. We are to be a city that's set up on a hill. And we can't be hid if that's the case.

We're not to take our candle and put it under a bushel, as Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount. We're to set it out in the house and let that light shine. It's not to partake in the evil deeds of this world.

It's not to do the same actions or say the same things as the wickedness in this world does. I said folks, the world will rub off on you.

It will rub off on you. Even somebody that's born again, cleansed, keeps their nose in the Bible every day, prayed, and they say, prayed up. They got an awesome fair walk with God, all these things.

You hang out with the world long enough and that stuff will start to fall to the side. That's why church attendance is so important. That's why fellowship with other believers is so important because if you're not getting it with them, you're going to get it from somewhere else.

[21 : 09] If you're not having fellowship with people of a locked faith, you're going to have fellowship with somebody that doesn't have a locked faith with you. And before you know it, you're going to hook up with one of these people as a friend, as a boyfriend, girlfriend, whatever the case is, maybe even a spouse.

You're going to hook up with them, be hanging out with them long enough, and you're going to be believing in a Jesus Christ that is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible. You're going to be believing in this Jesus of so many people in the world believe in that will save their souls and let them live however they want to with no consequence.

And that's a false God. That's a false Jesus and that's idolatry. And that's a whole other thing. But friendship with the world is enmity with God.

Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Whosoever, believers and nonbelievers alike, hey, if whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life, if that whosoever means whosoever, this whosoever means whosoever.

Whosoever will be a friend of the world, therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Saved and lost alike. Whether we like it or not, folks, that's the Scripture. Whether we agree with it or not, that's the Scripture.

[22 : 33] Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy that he giveth more grace? Praise God. Wherefore, he saith God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble.

In verse 5, do you think the Scripture saith in vain the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy? I searched and searched and searched years ago for this verse in Scripture.

Not verse 5, but chapter 4 of James, where it says, do you think the Scripture saith in vain the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy? And I can't find it.

And that confused me as a newly born again Christian that confused me. I was like, well, why would he be saying that this is in here if it's not? The teaching of it is in here.

The teaching of it is in several different places. But the Scripture, I mean, this very quote, I can't find in Scripture. What is he saying? What does James say? And do you think that the Scripture saith in vain the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy?

[23 : 42] The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy but he giveth grace. Wherefore, he said, saith God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble.

The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy. Well, this Spirit that's brought up here, I don't see a capital S in the front of it. So that immediately tells me we're not talking about the Holy Spirit.

So what Spirit are we talking about then? That's got to be the Spirit of man. That's got to be our desire. That's our lust. And it says the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth the envy is jealous.

It's jealous. Now, all this being said, like I said, this Spirit is not capitalized, not in my Bible. So I don't think James is talking about the Holy Spirit here, but that being said on the flip side of that coin, the Holy Spirit is jealous.

Our Spirit's jealous. Why else would our Spirit, your Spirit of man, both? Why else would Paul go on basically a chapter on Renton, Romans chapter 7, about the war that happens between the flesh and the Spirit?

[24 : 56] The war that happens between our flesh, our Spirit, our desires, and our lusts, and the Holy Spirit of God? This is the same chapter where Paul says, that which I would do, I do not, and that which I would not, that I do.

He's saying, what I know I'm supposed to do, I don't do that. And what I know I'm not supposed to do, that's what I do. Why is that? It's because that's the Spirit in us.

Our Spirit is jealous, but the Holy Spirit of God is also jealous. God himself is jealous. Read Exodus chapter 34, if you don't believe me, it's got a capital J in jealous.

One of the names of God in Scripture is jealous. And he is jealous, and he tells Israel that he's jealous. Why is he jealous of them though? The same way I would be if my wife was flirting with some fellow out on the street, or the same way she would be if I was flirting with some woman on the street.

It's not a hateful type of jealousy, but it's a, you're mind jealousy. Why are you doing this? And sometimes that jealousy may be directed at the spouse or at the child or whoever it is, as the sister or the brother, I mean my goodness, if y'all grew up with siblings, you got jealous over your siblings.

[26 : 14] I don't care if you're the older sibling or the younger sibling. You got jealous over something at some point. Maybe they received an award, or maybe they received an honor, maybe they got recognition for something, and you got jealous over that.

I was a baby brother of four boys. I know exactly how that feels. But when we get jealous over things, our Spirit gets jealous, but the Holy Spirit of God is jealous too. Why? Because God has saved our souls.

God has delivered us out of the bondage of sin, out of the bondage of Satan himself. And he's delivered us from the rat, from his own rat, that he has promised to everyone that doesn't believe in him, and then we go and we be a friend of the world.

That's why God is jealous. God says, you're mind. Why are you doing this? People talk about how the Scripture teaches that jealousy is a sin, jealousy is cruel within the grave, as Solomon wrote. And it does. It says and teaches all these things. And then they say, well, is God being sinful when he's just? No. No. He's doing just like you, and I would do.

[27 : 22] He's saying, you were mind. You don't act this way. His jealousy is not sinful. God has never committed sin. Jesus Christ never committed sin. No God was ever found in his mouth.

This jealousy is not sinful. But he says, the Spirit of Dwarveness lusteth to envy. Our Spirit lusteth to envy. But he giveth more grace.

But he giveth more grace. Therefore, he saith, God resisteth the proud that giveth grace under the humble. He resists the proud.

God will always resist the proud. Proverbs chapter 6, one of the very things that God hates, according to the Scripture, is a proud look. Again in Proverbs, it says that pride goes before destruction and the Holy Spirit before falling.

Pride goes before destruction. If you're going to walk around in your own pride, you're going to walk around with a proud look, destruction's coming. There's going to be turmoil, there's going to be bad stuff altogether coming your way if you walk around with a proud look.

[28 : 29] But he gives grace to the humble. He gives grace to those that walk around in humility.

He gives grace to those. Folks, if the Bible says, and it does here, this says God resisteth the proud that giveth grace under the humble, it means exactly what it says.

If somebody is walking around in the Holy Spirit, they're not going to get much grace from God. This is what I'm reading in the Scripture. When I come to God, when God saved my soul, I didn't come to Him in pride.

I come to Him because He humbled me down. And God done that with everyone else. God shows you how you've offended Him. God shows you what sins you've committed against Him, what transgressions you've made, what trespasses you've made against His moral law.

God shows you that He is perfect and you certainly are not. And He showed me the same thing. And that's a humbling thing. It's a humbling thing. And this is one of the reasons it's so hard to talk to people nowadays.

And once again, I blame the church for a lot of it. It's hard to talk to people about the gospel because a lot of the church has convinced people that they're all right when they're not.

[29 : 47] They've said, you just do this. You throw money in the plane. You show up once or twice or maybe three times a year for service. You tell your mom or your lover before you leave her.

And all these other things. They say, you'll be all right with God. You, you, you do this. You do these things and people get it in their head.

I'm all right because I have done these things. Most of my salvation has nothing to do with what I've done or anything that I can do. It has to do with the finished work of Jesus Christ on a cross.

That's where my salvation comes from. And I can have no pride of my own in that. I can have no credit to that. Jesus Christ done that on His own for me.

And for everyone that has ever believed. Therefore, I must be humble. And God humbled me down when He saved me and God humbled you down when He saved you.

[30 : 46] And He gives grace to the humble. But God, it takes God to humble us down. We can't, we can't humble ourselves to the point to be saved. God must do it.

Because, well, why is that? Because the Spirit that dwells in us loves the things. But our Spirit is jealous. God has to be the one to do this. Verse 7, Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. My goodness, that sounds pretty easy. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. I've heard this verse quoted and quoted and quoted.

You probably have too. But we have a problem doing it. You remember this though. I've come and brought it up at least a half an hour in time this morning. He's writing to believers.

I can't tell you how many people I've heard preach and I've heard teach that God won't save you unless you completely submit yourself to Him.

[31 : 46] And I dare say this morning, right here within these walls, there are very few, if any of us there, absolutely 100% totally committed and submitted to God.

We've held something back. We've held something back from Him. James is writing to believers and he's telling them submit yourselves. Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. I believe these things. I believe that if I resist the devil, he will flee. Folks, I don't mean he's going to stay out beyond or somewhere.

If you believe that the three temptations we read, Jesus Christ suffered through in the Gospels, that's only three times he was tempted. You're horribly mistaken.

The man was tempted from the time he was born to the time he ascended. He was tempted by the devil. He was tempted by the devil. He was tempted by demons. He was tempted by all kinds of things.

[32 : 43] But he overcame that temptation. We resist the devil and the devil will flee, but the devil will be back. The demons will be back. They'll be back with the desires that they know that we have.

They'll be back with the lust that they know that we have. They'll be tempted us with what they know appeals to us. But we need to submit ourselves therefore to God. Folks, this is probably over and over in Scripture.

This is the same thing and a lot of you probably know about heart. Romans chapter 12 again verse 1. And you keep in mind Paul was writing to the church then too.

He wasn't writing to mainly Jews when he wrote it either. He was writing to the Roman church, mainly about the Gentiles. But what does he say?

My brethren, I beseech you, give yourselves over as a living sacrifice. What is that? That's submitting yourself to God. Holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

[33 : 46] And again, he's writing to believers when he said that Paul was. James is writing to believers here. But Paul and James both understood that the Christian church, the believers in Christ, were not fully submitted.

But they were encouraging them to do so. Listen, I can't find one example. I'm going to go and include this before I read another verse. I can't find one example in Scripture.

Not one from the time that Paul got saved on the road to Damascus to the time that Paul told Timothy he was ready to die.

I can't find one example in Scripture of Paul not being submitted to God, not being fully submitted to God.

I can't find one example of that in the Scripture. If there was ever a man outside of Jesus Christ that was submitted to God, it was Paul. Because I can't find an example in Scripture otherwise.

[34 : 45] But Paul and James both realized that this was an issue in the church. And folks, it's an issue nowadays. We're not. We're not completely submitted to God.

Yet we believe and yet we're saved. I remember they were writing to believers, but we're not fully submitted. Why do you keep them? Why do you hold them back?

Why do you hold them back? People say all the time, I hear Christians over and over and over.

They say, you know, my spiritual life's suffering. Why is that? Why does my spiritual life suffer?

Because I'm holding back. Because I'm not fully submitted. I'm not fully committed. Does that mean I'm not saved? Not according to what I read in Scripture.

But my spiritual life could be so much more filled, so much more fulfilled if I would do that very thing, submit myself therefore to God.

[35 : 42] Resist in the devil. We'd like to pay attention to that. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. But we kind of forget about that first part of that verse. Submit yourself there for under God.

We're like, resist the devil and he'll flee. What good does it do to resist the devil if we're not fully submitted to God? So, God bless you all. I appreciate your attention. Any questions or comments?