

A STUDY OF JAMES (14)

Wars Among You (1)

James 4:1-12

The Book of James

- Continuing our study of James, we have addressed numerous practical applications.
- In the past 2 lessons, we have addressed the tongue – the things we say (**James 3:1-12**).
- And contrasting the wisdom of this world with the wisdom that is from above (**James 3:13-18**)
- Tonight we continue to examine James' warning and concerns about what he has heard. We want to talk about "wars" we need to address.

Where do wars come from? 4:1

- War is always an ugly thing!
- And at times while it might be necessary (to achieve peace facing a bully), it is still horrific – death, torture, cruelty, hatred, destruction, devastation, etc.
No one of character wants physical war.
- The wars we are addressing are different
 - with one another
 - with ourselves
 - against God
- These “wars” come with spiritual consequences.

Where do wars come from? **4:1**

- Within context, recall **James 3:17-18** where James contrasts the wisdom from above and sensual, earthly and demonic wisdom of the majority.
- With the strong language James uses, clearly some within his audience had problems with this.
 - Jew vs. Gentile?
 - Rich vs. poor?
 - Free vs. slave?
- Whatever it was, they were wrong! Their efforts were unproductive.

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- Desires that war within your members
- Strife always starts within (and often it is both or all parties involved).
- They originate with our desire for pleasure (hedonistic)
- They are the product of lust – one's own intense cravings. While this Greek word can have a positive effect (cf. **Luke 22:15**), translated "lust" always has a negative connotation. **James 1:12-15**, Our lusts is where Satan will tempt us.
- They war in your members – a battle for you heart and mind – cf. **Matthew 15:19-20, 1 Peter 5:8**

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- Desires that war within your members
- You lust and do not have:
- You murder and covet and cannot obtain –
Was James literal or was it hyperbole?

Matthew 5:21-22, 1 John 3:15

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- Desires that war within your members
- You lust and do not have:
- Prayer failure 1 – You do not ask: This is asking for the right things or with the right motives.
Cf. James 1:5-8 – for wisdom (with faith), humility, love, unity, for “one another”, etc.
James 1:17, 1 John 5:14-15
- Prayer failure 2 – selfish prayers for personal wants, perhaps even against your perceived “enemy”. Selfish pursuits – self-promotion, material desires.
NOTE: Do we try to hide our real motives? (False humility)
“If only I had a better car...”
“I want a shortcut dealing with my struggles...”

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- Friendship with the world
- *Adulterers and adulteresses* – is it literal or figurative?
 - Again likely figurative. Consider this Jewish audience being familiar with **Hosea**, or **Jeremiah 2:20**.
 - Also recall how the church of Christ is described – **2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-33**
 - WHEN we are living in sin, we are being unfaithful to Him!
- Note: Earlier mss omit “adulterers”. Does not change the meaning!

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- Friendship with the world
- *Friendship with the world* – a problem we must face
DEEP DOWN WITHIN US!
 - Are we trying to please 2 masters? **Matthew 6:24,**
1 John 2:15-17, etc.
- Note: Friendship goes deeper than just an acquaintance.
Cf. John 15:14 – Jesus speaking to His apostles.
- Also, we cannot isolate ourselves from the world –
1 Corinthians 5:9-10. This is about letting the ways of
the world opposed to God influencing you.

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- Friendship with the world
- *Whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God –*
- Pursuing the world puts us at enmity (a state of hostility) with Him? **Romans 8:7**
- We make Him our enemy – we are at war with Him!
We are in “a hostile environment”

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- You will NOT win! (**5-6**)
- *Or do you think the scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us years jealously?" –*
- James is declaring, if you choose to fight against God, you will not succeed. (cf. Jacob – **Genesis 32:22ff**)

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- You will NOT win! (**5-6**)
- *Or do you think the scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?" –*
- A challenging text because the "scripture" in vs. 5 cannot be found in scripture. Possibilities:
 - 1) Quoting a writing we do not have
 - 2) More likely, appealing to a concept about God they would have known – **e.g., Deuteronomy 32:16, 21** – He is a jealous God.
 - 3) Leading up to the quote in **vs. 6**. "Spirit" could be describing the spirit of man yearning jealously – he is seeking his own pursuits – **e.g., Genesis 6:5, 8:21**

Our personal war (within)? **4:1-6**

- You will NOT win! (**5-6**)
- *But He gives more grace. Therefore... God resists the proud...*
- God's grace is greater than what man can do (which is why you will NOT win!). One might say, "While God's grace is greater..."
- **Proverbs 3:34** *Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.*
God resists him who is proud

Concluding thoughts- **4:1-12**

- After addressing these concerns, James gives the solution in 7 parts:
 - 1) Submit to God
 - 2) Resist the devil
 - 3) Draw near to God
 - 4) Cleanse yourselves
 - 5) Purify your hearts
 - 6) Lament and mourn (true repentance)
 - 7) Humble yourselves.
- This will be our next lesson in this study.

Concluding thoughts- **4:1-12**

- The world is at war with God and Jesus.
- We too are at war, whether we like it or not –
**Ephesians 6:10-12, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5,
1 Timothy 6:12, etc.**
- The only question is...

In this “war”, whose side are you on?