



Sunday April 03, 2022
James Chapter 4

DESIRES FOR PLEASURE

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"?

In chapter one, James has addressed the matter of evil desires, stating that we are tempted as we are drawn by our own evil desires, and drawn into sin. James raises this matter again.

4:1 James addresses 'wars and fights', conflicts, strife, quarrels, divisions, dissensions among God's people. What is the underlying cause of 'wars and fights' among God's people? It is the same 'desire for pleasures', those fleshly desires that are fighting in our own selves (bodies, self).

4:2 Notice what evil desires lead us to do: lust, murder (remember hate is murder), covet, fight, war. Yet none of these things enable us to have or obtain what we desire. Because evil desires lead us to do all the wrong things, instead of the one thing we need to do, which is to ask God. James taught us in chapter one, that if we lack wisdom or lack anything we are to ask God.

4:3 However, our asking must not come from our lusting, our evil desires. If our asking is motivated by evil desire, to spend it on our evil pleasures, we will ask and not receive.

How do we apply this?



If your desire for something is leading you into hate, covetousness, fighting, warring with others, especially other believers – you can be sure that (A) either that desire is a wrong desire, or (B) you are going about pursuing your desire in a wrong way.

Example, think about spiritual leadership. If you desire to be a spiritual leader, the apostle Paul taught us that it is a good thing. Paul stated: *"If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work"* (1 Timothy 3:1). However, if in order to be in spiritual leadership you get into conflict, strife, warring, fighting, hating, coveting, etc., you are then going about it in a wrong way, or the motivation with which you are desiring a good thing is actually wrong.

A classic example is when the mother of James and John wanted her two sons to be seated on either side of Jesus, one on the right and the other on the left. It caused quite a bit of division among the twelve. In this teachable moment Jesus gave us that great lesson on what the heart of a leader is truly about: *"...whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:26-28)

Two side notes we must mention here:

One way to ensure that our desires are kept right is to first have the Word of God dwelling in us. The Lord Jesus taught us that His Word makes us clean (John 15:3) and subsequently He stated:

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

If we are deeply rooted in Him and His Word in us, we can be sure that our desires are purified through our relationship with Him and His Word. In such a context, He gave us a 'blank check', to ask whatever we desire.

Second, we are clear that God is not against us enjoying the good things He created. It is when we are pursuing the gratification of evil desires or allowing things to dominate us, that we are in the wrong. The Bible states that God give us richly all things to enjoy:

1 Timothy 6:17

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.



4:4 Having warned against evil desires James presents the strongest rebuke to believers possible, as he calls them “adulterers and adulteresses!”. An adulterer is one who has broken covenant and left his first love and gone off with someone else. This is used to describe believers who have deserted their love for God and pursued friendship with the world. To be a friend of the world makes us an enemy with God.

How do we apply this correctly?

We know we must engage with the world. We are in the world, and we interact, live our lives in and among people of this world. We do not disconnect or isolate ourselves from the world. The world is our mission field. People in the world need to be reached with the love and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, we meaningfully engage with the world. However, as we engage with the world, we do not conform ourselves to the world. Also, as we engage with the world, we make sure that our love for the Lord Jesus keeps growing stronger and is never replaced by love for the things of the world.

The Lord Jesus expressed this in His prayer:

John 17:15-18

15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

4:5 The Spirit of God who is in us desires for more of us, yes, all of us. When James references “*the Scripture says*”, there is no specific Old Testament Scripture he is referring to, but the essence of what the Scripture teaches, that God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), and desires for us to be His own special people (Deuteronomy 7:6). Since God desires us to be completely His, we should not even venture to engage in unholy, ungodly friendship with the world.

MORE GRACE - SUBMIT. DRAW NEAR. HUMBLE YOURSELF.

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.

4:6 So how should we conduct ourselves, in view of all the problems caused by our own desires for pleasures and the danger of friendship with the world. The answer - God empowers us with more grace. There is more grace available. Grace empowers us to overcome. Grace empowers us to live as friends of God in this world. But this grace is given to those who will humble themselves before God.

If we walk in pride, which is self-dependence and self-reliance, we are not positioned to receive God's grace.

God gives grace to the humble. So if we desire for more grace, we must humble ourselves.

The higher up we go in life, the higher up we go in the things of God, we need more grace to operate there, and more grace comes as we further humble ourselves before God.

4:7-10 James presents five actions we must take to position ourselves to receive more grace to overcome desires for pleasures and live as friends of God:

- Submit to God (vs 7)
- Resist the devil (vs 7)
- Draw near to God with clean hands and pure hearts (vs 8)
- Be contrite before God concerning sin (vs 9)
- Humble yourselves before God and let Him exalt you (vs 10)

DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER

11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Now, as part of bringing the warring and fighting to an end and giving no room for evil desires causing strife amongst ourselves, we must determine not to speak evil of one another.



When we speak evil of another brother, we are in effect passing judgment, and taking God's place as Judge.

Now how do we balance this with speaking the truth about someone, and making honest assessments, administering correction and other situations where we need to confront and address matters. The key is intent. What is our motivation?

Making honest assessments, administering Correction, Speaking Truth In Love

There are times and situations where we need to address matters that require to be addressed. We may have positions of leadership or responsibilities where we need to address difficult behavior. For instance, if something is wrong, we must state that it is wrong. If someone is doing something wrong, we need to call that out and state that someone is doing wrong.

In the workplace if someone is not measuring up to what is expected in that role, we need to state it so. If they are not being productive, if their work is faulty, etc. these matters must be addressed, and the only way we can do it is by stating the facts and calling these out. The challenge is how do we be "edifying" and be a "blessing" in such a situation, when "correction" or "poor performance" must be addressed.

The focus must be to present the truth in love, with grace, address matters without destroying the individual, to present hope, whenever possible. Of course, a lot also depends on the individual receiving correction or feedback on how they will choose to perceive what is being spoken. If a person is able to receive feedback and correction and use it to improve, well and good. If they are unable to handle feedback and correction, that is outside our control.

Avoid flattery

A danger to avoid is flattery. Sometimes in order not to speak evil of another and to be pleasing to people, we end up flattering people. To flatter is to say good things when we don't really mean it or when it really is not so. We say good things because we know it will make the other person feel good, or make the other person appear good, when actually what really must be spoken is "the hard truth". So, we should not misunderstand the Scriptures above, as encouraging us to flatter people.

OUR DEPENDENCE ON GOD

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";



14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

James now changes subject to address those who have the means and capabilities to be self-reliant and self-dependent. He reminds us that our life is fragile and fleeting. We are here today and could be gone tomorrow. So, we must put our full reliance and dependence on the Lord and not boast in our own abilities. This is the right way to live and operate. Therefore, we do the right thing, daily. If we do not do the right thing, when we know what the right thing to do is, then we sin (4:17).

As an aside, we must remember that all Scripture must be understood, interpreted, and applied, in the light of the rest of Scripture. Sometimes people have the tendency to take a passage like James 4:13-17 or Matthew 6:25-34 to live carelessly, without a plan, direction, and purpose. They do not make any plans or preparations for the future. They claim they are living "one day at a time" or are not "worried about tomorrow". We must remember that the Scriptures, especially in Proverbs teaches us to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6-8), have foresight (Proverbs 22:3).

SALVATION CALL

If you ask, does God love me? We can tell you what the Bible says: John 3:16, Romans 5:8

If you ask, how can I have my sins forgiven? We can tell you what the Bible says: Acts 10:43; 1 John 2:2,12

If you ask, what is the way to God? We can tell you what the Bible says: John 14:6

If you ask, how can I become a child of God? We can tell you what the Bible says: John 1:12

If you ask, where can I find salvation? We can tell you what the Bible says: Acts 4:12

If you ask, what must I do to experience salvation? We can tell you what the Bible says: Acts 16:30-31

As an act of your own free choice, we invite you to make this decision to follow Jesus.

SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY TIME

Minister as the Spirit leads



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday April 03, 2022
James Chapter 4

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full-length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at our [sermons page](#) . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship, and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture reference: *James 4*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, Consider James 4:1-5. Discuss how our desire for pleasures (evil desires) can lead to conflict (wars and fights) in relationships. How would becoming a friend of God help resolve these wars and fights, and actually build friendships in relationships?

2, Consider James 4:6-10. How do we receive 'more grace' in our lives, so we can be empowered even more by His grace?



3, What could be a possible misapplication of James 4:11-12? How could we apply this instruction correctly as we relate to people?

4, What could be a possible misapplication of James 4:13-17? How do we apply this correctly in everyday life?

If time permits, each one can take a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>

SERMON BRIEF

Epistle of James – A book study. James Chapter Two.

This is part-2 in this sermon series, a study of the book of James. James was possibly the first book of the New Testament to be written. Faith without works is dead. But how does faith work itself in everyday life situations? This is a key theme through the book of James as he tackles a range of daily life situations: trials, temptations, true religion, managing temper, taming the tongue, human relationships, desire for pleasures, prayer, being rich, being poor, wisdom, planning, and more. James shares in brief, what faith would look like in these situations. A simple, practical, and insightful book. A study you do not want to miss!

KEYWORDS

Book of James, Epistle of James, James chapter four, book study of James, verse by verse study of James, faith in everyday life, faith without partiality, faith without prejudice, faith and works, faith and corresponding actions



REFERENCES/CITATIONS

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