

James 4:1-10

- Intro:**
- Does James appear to expand on his previous statements that worldly wisdom, jealousy, and selfish ambition create disorder and “every evil thing”? (cf. 3:15,16)
 - How do these contextual circumstances color the interpretation of these verses?
 - belief-only teachers? (cf. 2:14,18-20; 3:1)
 - Jewish-Christian legalism?
 - economic impoverishment of Jewish Christians in Judea?
 - anti-Roman sentiment in Judea in early 60s of first century?
- Vs. 1**
- Were the “quarrels and conflicts” James mentions between...
 - Christians in the church community to which James was writing?
 - Judean residents in general?
 - Romans and Palestinian peoples?
 - What was the source of their anti-social behaviors?
 - passions in their physical bodies?
 - selfish ambitions in the Body of Christ?
 - diabolic egomania in the hearts of the people?
 - hedonistic self-concern within Christians?
 - passionate nationalism among Judean peoples?
- Vs. 2**
- How would you explain the “lust that was leading to murder”?
 - Christians desiring to be fundamentally right, so they would kill those who disagreed?
 - Jewish-Christians desiring self-rule, so they engaged in murderous mercenary acts against the Romans?
 - Christians desiring power or authority, so they had murderous hate for those standing in their way? (cf. Matt. 5:21.22; I Jn. 3:12,15)
 - Christians with such selfish desires that they would kill another Christian to get what they wanted?
 - Does the “envy that leads to fighting and quarreling” refer to...
 - jealous regard for “truth” that led to conflicts?
 - zealous nationalism that led to militaristic war with the Romans?
 - power-envy that led to internecine struggles?
 - personal jealousy that created discord and contention?
- Vs. 3**
- What was James saying about their prayer requests?
 - “You do not have what you really want because you do not seek God’s wisdom and fulfillment”?
 - “You seek the selfish fulfillment of your desires to indulge your own self-interest”?
 - “You want nationalistic self-rule so you can do your own thing, whether it is what God wants or not”?
 - “You want God to bless what you’re doing even though it is evil, and God will not answer such requests”?
- Vs. 4**
- Do you think that James’ charge of “adulteresses” refers to...
 - physical adultery between Christians?
 - spiritual adultery or unfaithfulness to God?
 - Why does James declare such an either/or dichotomy between the world and God?
 - because Satan is the “ruler of this world” (cf. II Cor. 4:4) in opposition to God?
 - because the world-system is antithetical to the kingdom of God?
 - because no man can serve two masters at the same time? (cf. Matt. 6:24)
- Vs. 5**
- What does James mean by the unknown “Scripture” he cites?
 - God is jealous that the Holy Spirit in the Christian should be in control of the Christians’ behavior?
 - God desires that the spirit that he created in us should function as intended?
 - the Spirit that dwells in Christians intensely desires that we be faithful to God?
 - God cannot tolerate unfaithful people and jealously desires His bride, the Church, should allow His Spirit to be the indwelling Lord of Christian lives?

- Vs. 6**
- Is James saying that...
 - God's grace is greater than His jealousy?
 - greater is the grace of He who is in you, than the disorder of he who is in the world? (I John 4:4)
 - the dynamic of God's sufficiency is greater than the satanic solicitation to sin?
 - God's grace is sufficient to overcome our sinful and self-oriented tendencies?
 - When James quotes (apparently from Prov. 3:34; cf. I Pet. 5:5) is he indicating that...
 - God's character is contrary to arrogance, but provides for the lowly?
 - God is set against proud self-sufficiency, but He supplies all things to those who are receptive and available to His sufficiency?
 - God resists those who think they do not need Him, but graciously gives everything necessary to those who know they need Him?
- Vs. 7**
- How many imperatives does James use in the series of exhortations in verses 7-10, whereby he seems to seek to encourage humility, repentance and faithfulness?
 - Choose the meaning which you think best expresses James' meaning in his admonitions:
 - "Submit to God"
 - Be willing to be subordinated to God
 - Do what God says.
 - Subject yourselves to God's sovereign control.
 - "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"
 - Engage in the battle of spiritual warfare with the devil and he will be defeated.
 - Resist the diabolic tendencies of demonic wisdom (3:15), selfish ambition (3:14,16), and friendship with the world (4:4), and they will be overcome.
 - Stand against Satan by standing dependently in Christ, and selfish sinfulness will be conquered.
- Vs. 8**
- "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you"
 - Does God seem far away? Guess who moved!
 - The more you seek God, the more you will sense Him close to you.
 - Come to God in repentance and contrition, and you will find Him ever ready with His grace, love and forgiveness to accept you.
 - "Cleanse your hands, you sinners"
 - Cleanliness is next to godliness.
 - As priests of God, you cannot come before God without being cleansed.
 - Sinful Christians need to confess their sins, and be cleansed of all unrighteousness (cf. I John 1:9)
 - "Purify your hearts, you double-minded"
 - develop a single focus on God instead of a double-vision on God and the world.
 - those who think they can go with God and dabble with the devil must give up the latter for a pure heart.
 - make your choice – you can't straddle the fence and walk in two worlds.
- Vs. 9**
- "Be miserable, mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom."
 - you must be distressed and devastated about your sinful behavior.
 - foolish festivities of worldliness must be replaced by repentance.
 - the "sackcloth and ashes attitude" of repentance is in order when Christians misrepresent the character of God.
- Vs. 10**
- "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."
 - those who are dependent upon Christ will be glorified.
 - Submit to God in repentance, and God will make you all He wants you to be.
 - Take your proper place of subordination before God, and He will lift you up on high.
- Conc.**
- If you were to select a theme for these verses, what would it be?
 - Are there any individual or collective sins that we need to repent of?