

March 16, 2025 - James 4:1-6 - The Culprit of Conflict

### Introduction:

We live in a world where people do irresponsible and reckless things to fulfill their immediate needs. Often these needs are for greedy purposes for lustful desires. I share a few stories this morning that I thought would give you a humorous look at stupid things people will do to fulfill lustful desire, namely money. These stories could be on Judge Jeanine segment of stupid criminals.

**Story #1:** "A burglars in Larch Barrens, Maryland was arrested after being apprehended trying to rob a safe. He was working at cutting through the safe using a Laser Tag gun.

**Story #2:** "Karen Lee, 20, was arrested in Lake City, Florida for the robbery of a Howard Johnson's motel. She was armed with an electric chain saw however, it was not plugged in.

**Story #3:** A South Brunswick man who police say had sought revenge against a man dating his ex-girlfriend caused \$10,000 in damage to the vehicles in a driveway. The Perp believed that the vehicle in the driveway "belonged to the person who was dating his former girlfriend however, it turned out he went to the wrong house.

**Story #4:** April 11 (UPI) -- A couple of bank robbers in Brazil failed to steal any valuables but succeeded in not setting off the security alarms. Both men were wrapped from head-to-toe in aluminum foil in an apparent attempt to disguise their presence from the bank's security system. Police said the foil suits did work in hiding the men's presence from the alarms, but it did nothing to prevent them from being spotted by security cameras.

### Transition:

Last time we were in James we discovered that there are two kinds of wisdom: wisdom from below and wisdom from above. In this passage we will learn that James attributes the cause of fights and quarrels among his readers as being "... lustful desires that battle within. This is one of the most compelling passages in this epistle and it deals again with another test of living faith, another test of genuine faith. James has been giving us a series of tests by which to evaluate the genuineness of one's faith. Let's look at...

### I. The Reason for the Problem (4:1)

1. James reveals the reason for the feuding in verse 1, that there was a lot of fighting and feuding going on in the Jewish congregations of the Dispersion. There was

discrimination between the rich and poor. Many were talking too much, arguing, and criticizing. There was bitterness and envy in the church. A careful study of the believers to whom James was writing reveals they were not at all different from Christians today. You see, they were just like you and me. There were wars and fighting's, literally "fights and quarrels" in the church over unfulfilled desires.

2. What was the reason for the fights and quarrels? James said there lusts! The Greek word translated lusts basically means "desire for, pleasure" or "desire for satisfaction." What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? It appears that James could be speaking of how our old nature wars to have it way or for the unsaved the degenerate spirit within you desires its own way.

Consequently, the desire for prestige, power, or prominence in the church was causing conflict. People who live only to please themselves have a yearning for preeminence and power it always causes conflict. Pride is the culprit! Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom. ---Proverbs 13:10 /

James proceeds to introduce...

## 2. The Revelation of the Problem (4:2-3)

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain...

1. Now James describes the behavior caused by lust or to covet. In other words "You lust and do not have; so you kill." There is some debate as to whether the phrase ye kill should be taken literally or metaphorically. No one can say for sure, but there is no reason to believe James was not talking in literal terms.

**Illustration:** An excellent example of the truth of this statement occurred not long ago. A pastor of one of the largest churches in his denomination became involved with another woman. Apparently in order to get the woman and keep his prestigious pastorate, he tried to murder his wife and fabricate evidence that someone else had done it. In the OT King David lusts drove him to do kill Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba after she became pregnant with his child in II Samuel 11:14-17.

2. We know that lust / greed can leads to murderous thoughts, words, and actions. Because of lust, James says to his readers, ye fight and war (4:2b). This phrase explains the frustration of unfulfilled pleasure-seeking. We want something and don't get it, so in frustration we fuss and fight. The Greek word translated fight means to engage in a war of words, to quarrel. To "war" (STRATEUO) is a military word from which we get our English word "strategy." It is the idea of getting people on your side to take on the enemy to create a conflict...

**3. Moreover James says, yet ye have not, because ye ask not (4:2c). Lust is catastrophe for your prayer life. Some lust-seeking believers pray, and James says to them... because ye ask amiss, “ka’kōs” means inappropriately and can be translated sick...that ye may consume it upon your lusts. What he is saying is that they ask for the wrong reason, motive even for sick purposes. (Robert)**

**4. James is not saying Christians are not to have desires or to pray for pleasurable things in life? God knows our hearts and our motives; be careful how you pray. Be sure you are praying for the right purpose and not for evil desire. We are to pray for health, family, a particular job, the education of our children, an enjoyable vacation, etc. God wants us to be happy and fulfilled but not at the expense of others or our relationship with Him.**

– Psalms 37:4

**Application: We all search for something to fulfill us & make us happy, whether it is people, objects, position or power. When we get what we desire, we feel a certain emotion we call happiness and strive for it again and again like a drug it is unattainable. Contentment--- I Timothy 6:10-12\_\_\_\_\_**

### **3. The Result of The Problem (4:4-6)**

**1. James describes the result of lust in the lives of believers by saying ye adulterers and adulteresses (v. 4:4a). Adultery is often used as a metaphor in the Bible to describe spiritual adultery or unfaithfulness to God. James is not suggesting that friendship with people in the world makes one the enemy of God, but friendship with the world. The Greek word translated world (*KOSMOS*) refers to the evil world system. --- I John 2:15-16**

**2. Being friends with the world is adopting the world -view and living by it. Friendship with the world is incompatible with a relationship with God; more than that, it makes one the enemy of God because God is the archenemy of all that is selfish, and harmful or hurtful to human beings. In verse #4 what we're talking about here is affection for the world, an emotional attachment to the world. In fact, we might even imply that it's a strong affection for the world. It's not casual but it implies a deep and an intimate longing to be involved with the world. It is a falling in love with the world system, with all the drives and impulses that we would associate with it. The cost of worldliness is in conflict with others and your soul. -gospel**

**3. As Christians we must make a choice to live by the world view or by the "Word view." Not to choose the "Word view" is to automatically make ourselves the enemies of God. The ungodly world-system stands as an enemy of the soul. David Wells defines**

worldliness as “what any particular culture does to make sin look normal and righteousness look strange.”

As Christians, we are in the world, but we must be on guard against its influence. We make our living in the world of business. We gain learning in the world of education. We are amused by the world of entertainment. We cheer for teams in the world of sports. We participate in discussions of religion. Like the air we breathe, the world is everywhere.



4. James continues the seriousness of the problem by saying in 4:5, Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy. ---Though this is a very difficult verse to interpret, James seems to be saying, "Don't you know that the Scriptures teach that God's Spirit is jealous for our total allegiance?" Failing to give God our total devotion and loyalty violates the teaching of Scripture. We are the bride of Christ, and the Holy Spirit does not want us finding our pleasure and fulfillment elsewhere.

God is a jealous god for his bride. Here's something that you need to know: Our God is a jealous God. He is passionate about our relationship to him. He also knows that if we give our hearts over to anything else it will destroy us. I appreciate the fact that God is jealous over our relationship. It's a sign that he cares. **Conclusion:**

The world with its immediate rewards and fulfillment of desires fosters pride. Yet, God's grace is reserved for those who are willing to acknowledge their need and give Him their complete allegiance.

## References

<a href="#">Exo 20:5</a>	Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy <b>God</b> <i>am</i> a <b>jealous God</b> , visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth <i>generation</i> of them that hate me;
<a href="#">Exo 34:14</a>	For thou shalt worship no other <b>god</b> : for the LORD, whose name <i>is</i> <b>Jealous</b> , <i>is</i> a <b>jealous God</b> :
<a href="#">Deu 4:24</a>	For the LORD thy <b>God</b> <i>is</i> a consuming fire, <i>even</i> a <b>jealous God</b> .
<a href="#">Deu 5:9</a>	Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy <b>God</b> <i>am</i> a <b>jealous God</b> , visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth <i>generation</i> of

	them that hate me,
 <a href="#">Deu 6:15</a>	(For the LORD thy <b>God</b> <i>is</i> a <b>jealous God</b> among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy <b>God</b> be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.
 <a href="#">Jos 24:19</a>	And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he <i>is</i> an holy <b>God</b> ; he <i>is</i> a <b>jealous God</b> ; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.