

James

Chapter 4, Part 1

- I. Introduction
 - a. Lord willing, today we will cover the first 6 verses of the 4th chapter of James
- II. Commentary
 - a. **Verse 1**
 - i. Though this was a scattered flock, there was apparently a lot of conflict going on in the congregation
 - 1. Sometimes, persecution brings this
 - a. However, it seems here that the “*wars and fights*” came from worldly “*desires for pleasure*”
 - i. Selfish desires
 - ii. Jealousy
 - iii. Perhaps even family disputes
 - iv. Many church splits which supposedly come from doctrinal differences really come from worldly, fleshly problems
 - 1. That is, church members that simply do not like each other
 - a. John has strong language for such feelings
(1 John 4:20)
 - b. **Verse 2**
 - i. “*You lust...*” seems to speak of covetousness which is mentioned again
 - 1. They longed for wealth, prestige, or power
 - a. These are all worldly things which Jesus clearly said NOT to long for
 - i. Our society needs a good reminder of this
 - b. Any of these can stir up a lot of trouble
 - 2. Despite the fact that they lusted, they didn’t have the things they lusted for
 - a. Obviously, we see the providence of God
 - ii. “*You murder...*”
 - 1. Perhaps this could be speaking of actual murder in some cases
 - a. This is what coveting leads to in the worse case scenario
 - 2. Most probably, they were killing each other with their tongues
 - a. They were spending a lot of time fighting and warring
 - i. A church cannot properly operate with this type of relationship between its members
 - 1. Disagreement is allowed
 - a. However, we must always keep in mind that we all have the same goal
 - iii. Again, they desired to have, but, couldn’t obtain
 - 1. Perhaps sometimes they got what they were out for

- a. However, for a child of God no satisfaction can be found in the things of this world
 - i. Real satisfaction is only to be found in the things of the Lord
 - 1. This may be what James is speaking about
 - iv. *“Yet you do not have because you do not ask”*
 - 1. They were not seeking real inner peace from God by prayer
 - a. If they were spending more time in prayer, they’re relationship with God would have been much better and they would have found contentment
 - i. Are we not the same?
 - 1. Do we have close relationships with the Lord?
 - a. If we don’t, it is because we don’t ask
- c. **Verse 3**
 - i. This verse seems like a contradiction of the previous one
 - 1. It is not
 - a. This verse is speaking about selfish prayers
 - i. They weren’t asking for spiritual growth
 - ii. They were asking for worldly desires to be fulfilled
 - 1. As our Good Heavenly Father, God was saying “no” for they’re benefit
- d. **Verse 4**
 - i. They had allowed their lusts to take control of their lives
 - 1. You cannot serve God while living a life of sin
 - a. Some may think this is possible but it is not
 - i. David prayed, *“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation”* (**Psalms 51:12**)
 - 1. It was fleshly desire that led him to this point
 - 2. Jesus basically said the same thing in **Luke 16:13**
 - a. A person cannot serve themselves and God
 - i. If we put ourselves before God, we are self worshippers and idolaters
 - 1. We are all guilty to some extent – some more than others
 - b. Today in our society, one is actually encouraged to serve themselves
 - i. This is a form of religion called “humanism”
- e. **Verses 5-6**
 - i. This is the normal way of introducing an Old Testament quote
 - 1. However, this quote is not found in the Old Testament
 - a. This is more of a general Biblical principle that God (Who the Holy Spirit is) is a jealous God
 - ii. Even after we are saved, our depraved nature continues to give us problems
 - 1. It wars with the Holy Spirit that indwells us
 - a. The more we give in to it, the more it will control our lives
 - iii. We need God’s grace and He is there to give it to us
 - 1. However, as children of God, this is dependent on us

- a. Understand – this is not saving grace, but the grace that we grow into after we are saved
- b. We must humble ourselves before the Lord
 - i. This involves admitting our need for the Lord and our weakness to keep ourselves
 - ii. If we remain prideful and do not humble ourselves, the Lord will not give us grace to grow
 - 1. You see, spiritual growth is dependent on us too, in a sense