

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Chapter 4

Introduction

- 1) Our study of the **epistle of James** continues in seeking “the wisdom which is from above”
- 2) Chapters 1-3 emphasized:
 - a) Enduring trials and temptations and being doers of the word (ch. 1)
 - b) Avoiding the sin of partiality and a dead faith that does not have works (ch. 2)
 - c) The danger of the tongue; showing works done in the meekness of wisdom (ch. 3)
- 3) Chapter four warns of the dangers of pride and worldliness and how to overcome them

I) **The Danger of Strife and Friendship with the World (4:1-6)**

- A) The brethren were involved in prideful strife among themselves (v. 1 spiritual battles)
 - 1) Not from heavenly wisdom (promotes peace 3:18) but in worldly lusts (Rom. 7:23)
 - 2) They lust, covet [jealous, envy], and murder (v. 2a spiritual destruction 3:14, 16) and do not obtain their worldly desires
 - 3) Not asking for God’s good gifts for spiritual profit, but with selfish motives (vv. 2b-3)
- B) Friendship with the world (vv. 4)
 - 1) Makes one commit adultery against God (unfaithfulness Jer. 3:9, 20; Hos. 3:1; Mk. 8:38)
 - 2) Makes one an enemy of God (spiritual opposition 1 Jn. 2:15-16; 5:19; Matt. 6:24; 12:30)
 - 3) The teachings of Scripture are not in vain – we need the grace of God to help us overcome the worldly and prideful jealousies in our spirit (vv. 5-6)
 - a) God gives more grace to the humble, but resists the proud (Prov. 3:34; 16:5 1 Pet. 5:5)
 - b) God’s grace abounds to help us overcome our weaknesses and sin (Rom. 5:20; 2 Cor. 12:9); let us always seek God’s gracious help!! (Heb. 4:15-16; 1 Jn. 5:4)

II) **The Spiritual Cure for Pride and Worldliness (vv. 7-10)**

- A) Submit to God and resist the devil – humility vs. pride (v. 7)
 - 1) **Submit** = voluntarily place oneself *under* God’s authority
 - 2) **Resist** = defensive stance against, no compromise, no surrender (1 Pet. 5:9; Eph. 6:16)
- B) Draw near to God properly – cleanse hands and hearts (v. 8; 2 Chron. 15:2; Isa. 1:16)
 - 1) God draws near to one who seeks him with humble, pure devotion (Isa. 55:6; Psa. 145:18)
- C) Lament, mourn, and weep – attitude of repentance/regret for sin (v. 9; Matt. 5:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10)
- D) Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and you will be lifted up (v. 10; 1 Pet. 5:6; Lk. 18:14)

III) **Not Speaking Evil of One Another (vv. 11-12)**

- A) Acting as judges condemning others and not being humble doers of the law (v. 11; Lk. 18:9)
 - 1) Judge the law of God as incomplete/evil when we condemn others by our own standards
- B) Only one Lawgiver and Judge (v. 12; cf. Rom. 14:4, 10-13); must not usurp the place of God!

IV) **Not Boasting About Tomorrow (vv. 13-17)**

- A) Must not pridefully boast about what we “will” do in the future (vv. 13-15; Lk. 12:16-21)
 - 1) Not know what will happen tomorrow – cannot know or control the future (Prov. 27:1)
 - 2) Life is short, as a vapor – appears for a little while and then vanishes away (Psa. 39:5)
 - 3) Instead say “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that” (Acts 18:21)
 - a) Give proper regard to God and His providence – include God in our plans (Psa. 31:14-15)
- B) Such boasting results in failing to do what we know is the good will of God – sinful (vv. 16-17)

Conclusion

Pride and worldliness are destructive sins that will affect all areas of our spiritual and earthly lives. Seek to be humble, submitting to God and seeking His will for the good of others and your soul.