

James 4:1-17 **Edification through Admonition and Counsel**

Source of evil – Selfishness

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"?

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:
"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Resist the devil – Draw near to God

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.

Do Not Judge a Brother or the Law

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?

Do Not Boast About Tomorrow

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.

Failure to do the good you know is sin

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

Facts Revealed:

Source of evil – Selfishness [James 4:1-6]

✠ Jesus identified the source of evil:

✧ And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

All these evil things come from within and defile a man." [Matthew 7:20-23]

✠ James gives the same message with a slightly different focus:

- ✧ Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? [James 4:1]
- ✧ 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. You ask and do not receive, because **you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.** [James 4:2-3]
- ✧ When a person's relationship with God Most High is based on his own fleshly desires, the expectation of receiving the desired results falls to nothing. God is not obligated to honor this kind of request.
- ✧ 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.** [James 4:4]
- ✧ The Holy Spirit dwelling in us is a **jealous** spirit and does not accept our fleshly and worldly desires. God demands the preeminent place in our hearts. [James 4:5, Exodus 20:5, 34:14, Deuteronomy 4:24, 5:9, 6:15, 29:20, 32:15-22, Joshua 24:19, 1 Kings 14:22, Ezekiel 36:6, Nahum 1:22, 1 Corinthians 10:22]
- ✧ Then speaking of the Grace of God, James said; "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." [James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5, Psalm 12:3, 101:5, 138:6, Proverbs 3:34, 16:5, Habakkuk 2:4, Malachi 4:1-2, Luke 1:51-52]

Resist the devil – Draw near to God [James 4:7-10]

- ✧ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [James 4:7]
 - ✧ We resist the devil so he will flee from us, by saying **no** to temptation with the backing of our authority based on knowledge of Scripture.
 - ✧ Jesus is our prime example of one who resisted the devil when He was tempted, and He did it by using the Scriptures, the Word of God which is the sword of the Spirit. [Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13, Ephesians 6:17]
 - ✧ Jesus was totally submitted to God in obedience to the point of death on the cross. [Philippians 2:5-8, Hebrews 10:5-10, Psalm 40:6-8, Amos 5:21-23]
 - ✧ We have the clear assurance that if you draw near to God, He will draw near to you. [James 4:8, 1 Chronicles 28:9, 2 Chronicles 15:1-2, Isaiah 55:6]
 - ✧ If we desire to draw near to God there is a requirement that we prepare ourselves in sanctity, "Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom." [James 4:8-9]
 - ✧ David said, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise." [Psalm 51:17]
 - ✧ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. [James 4:10]

Do Not Judge a Brother or the Law [James 4:11-12]

- ✧ Do not (slander, malign) speak evil of one another, brethren.
 - ✧ Slanderous conversation that damages or disparages another person's reputation is a form of judging that Jesus condemned when He said, "Judge not that you be not judged." [Matthew 7:1]
 - ✧ Whoever maligns his brother is judging his brother.
 - ✧ Whoever maligns the Law is judging the Law.
 - ✧ If you malign God's Law you are not obedient to it and you set yourself up as superior to God's Word.
 - ✧ God is the only Lawgiver, and He is able to save you or destroy you.
 - ✧ We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of God and be required to account for every idle word we have spoken. [Matthew 12:36]
 - ✧ Since we will all give account for ourselves, who are you to condemn another?

Do Not Boast About Tomorrow [\[James 4:13-16\]](#)

- ✚ Mortal life is very uncertain, therefore it is foolish to declare what we will do in the future.
- ✧ We may plan for the future and declare that if we live we will accomplish our plan.
- ✧ However, our lives are in the hands of God, and we will only accomplish it if He allows it.
- ✧ Arrogant boasting is evil.
- ✧ Jesus taught about the one who planned to retire:

¹⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' ¹⁸ So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" ²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." [\[Luke 12:16-21\]](#)

Failure to do the good you know is sin [\[James 4:17\]](#)

- ✚ Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
- ✧ We need to put our faith into practice by doing what is good and demonstrating our love for one another.
- ✧ Jesus said that what we do to others, we do to Him. [\[Matthew 25:31-46\]](#)