

## Book of James—James 4

### Quarrels & Conflicts

#### I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

- 4:1... wars and fightings among you**—“It appears quite certain that the sacred writer has under consideration here strife, dissension, and warfare in the church, and *in* and *between* individuals... There were many bitter contentions in the world in the first century; and, the Jews, particularly, were divided into numerous warring camps, such as Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes, Zealots, and the like, each of which fought all the rest with great industry and effort. And there is ample evidence in the New Testament that converts to Christianity from Judaism often brought with them their contentious spirit and urged their views upon their brethren to the point of division (cf., Col 2:20-22)” [Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, p. 198]. |||||  
 “The kind of wars and fightings just mentioned is precisely that of pleasures warring against the soul's true interests 'in your members,' meaning not 'between members of the church' exclusively (though this is included), but within men themselves, individually” [James Burton Coffman's *Commentaries*].
- 4:2... ye have not because ye ask not**—“There is no hint here that if they had prayed for the ability to gratify their lustful pleasures God would have given it; rather, that their willful selfishness had dried up the springs of prayer within them” [James Burton Coffman's *Commentaries*].
- 4:3... ye ask amiss**—“not in the faith of a divine promise; nor with thankfulness for past mercies; nor with submission to the will of God; nor with a right end, to do good to others, and to make use of what might be bestowed, for the honour of God, and the interest of Christ...” [John Gill's *Exposition of the Entire Bible*].
- 4:4... ye adulterers and adulteresses**—“‘Spiritual adultery’ is the unfaithfulness of the church, which is the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Rom. 7:1-6; Rev. 21:2; 22:17). The marriage metaphor was extensively used in the Old Testament, as in Isa. 54:5; and the new Israel of God, the church, naturally took it over. Jesus used it in John 3:29; and also in Matt. 12:39” [James Burton Coffman's *Commentaries*].
- 4:5... The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy**—“There is, perhaps, no more difficult passage in the Epistle. ... Why does the spirit, which is in us, covet with great desire? Men in the flesh, and motivated by fleshly inclinations, are often prone to look with envious hearts upon those who enjoy greater prosperity than they possess; and covetously to desire the possessions of others. This disposition often leads them to hate their fellows, to attempt to obtain from them, by whatever means necessary, those things upon which they have fixed their hearts. Often people are exceedingly jealous of the possessions and attainments of others, and they desire to acquire that which others have, though they have no right thereto. Whether they are successful in this effort or not, their hearts are filled with envy, jealousy, covetousness. Such seems to have been the condition characteristic of many of those to whom James wrote. This disposition led to the commission of the crimes enumerated in the earlier part of the chapter (vv., 1-4). The writer had emphasized the sinfulness of all such; had shown that the general teaching of the Scripture forbids friendship with the world, and charged that the *spirit which God placed in them was exercising itself to envy*. We thus regard the passage to be declarative and not interrogative; the 'spirit' (which to envy yearns) to be the human spirit,

and not the Holy Spirit; the words, *envy* and *yearns* [in ASV, DRL], to be taken in their ordinary sense, and thus believe the passage to teach: 'The spirit which is in you is a covetous and envious one'" [Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, pp. 215-217].

**4:8...** Cf., Deut 4:5-8.

**4:11... judgeth the law**—"Therefore, James' words in this verse refer to the law of Christ in its entirety, and to the specific instance of certain Christians having broken it by their speaking against and judging one another, the specific part of that great law of Christ which they had violated being Matthew 7:1ff" [*James Burton Coffman's Commentaries*].

**4:13...** Cf., Job 7:6-10.

**4:15...** Cf., Acts 18:21; 21:14; 1 Cor 4:19; 16:7; Heb 6:3.

**4:17... to him it is sin**—"He who recognizes life's transient and fleeting character, but refuses to acknowledge the hand of God in the affairs of men, and who may even boast of his sufficiency and independence, but who will not do that which is right, is guilty of sin. ... Whether James' statement ... is to be regarded as an allusion to Paul's affirmation in Romans 14:13, ..., it is very true that the statements, taken together, establish the fact that (a) a knowledge of what is right creates the obligation to discharge the duty involved in it; and (b) doubt regarding the propriety of an act necessitates abstinence from it" [Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, pp. 252-53].

## II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **The Period of the Church.**

## III. Summary.

James seems to be preaching away in chapter four. It is commonly spoken of regarding what faithful preachers do in their sermons as: "stepping on toes." James must have been doing that to those who originally received this epistle and he continues to do so as we read it today. He begins by talking about division among them and points to the problem of covetousness as the root of the problem. The age-old concept of independence versus dependence is clearly spoken of in this chapter. God is NOT pleased with the independent-spirited Christian! Great strength is required to resist the devil, but that is what must be done. Humility is a quality to be desired in Christians. Censorious judgment of the kind condemned in Matthew 7:1ff is also condemned here by James. Planning is not bad; however, planning without taking into account the will of the Lord is wrong. We need to remind ourselves quite often as James does here that our lives are like a vapor that appears for a little time and then is gone. When we know to do good, it is sin not to do it.

## IV. Outline.

1. The friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:1-5).
2. God resists the proud (6).
3. Resist the devil; draw nigh to God (7-8).
4. Humble yourselves (9-10).
5. Quit judging (11-12).
6. Put God IN your plans (13-16).
7. Do that which is good (17).

## V. Questions.

**True or False**

01. \_\_\_\_\_ The double minded are instructed to purify their hearts.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ This chapter teaches that some of these Christians were not praying.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ For man to rejoice in his boastings is evil.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ God resists the humble person.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ In certain instances, laughter should be turned to mourning.

**Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)**

06. \_\_\_\_\_ James tells us there is one lawgiver who is able to save and to: (a) multiply; (b) destroy; (c) forgive.
07. \_\_\_\_\_ The source of fighting among brethren is: (a) lusts; (b) enemies; (c) outsiders.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ It would be good if every Christian would realize that our lives are like a: (a) walnut; (b) flight; (c) vapor.
09. \_\_\_\_\_ What will happen if we draw nigh to God: (a) He will draw nigh to us; (b) He will cause us to leave; (c) He will help us.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ James identifies how some of the Jewish Christians asked AMIS as: (a) to punish others; (b) to praise their neighbors; (c) to consume it upon their own lusts.

**Fill in the Blanks**

11. “Ye ought to say, \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord \_\_\_\_\_, we shall \_\_\_\_\_, and do this or that.”
12. If we resist the devil he will \_\_\_\_\_ from us.
13. God does this to the proud: \_\_\_\_\_.
14. There is one lawgiver who is able to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_.
15. “Therefore, to him that \_\_\_\_\_ to do good, and doeth it \_\_\_\_\_, to him it is \_\_\_\_\_.”

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week's handout*

**ANSWERS to James 3 Questions...** [(1) False, Js 3:8; (2) True, Js 3:17; (3) True, Js 3:3-5; (4) True, Js 3:12; (5) True, Js 3:9; (6) a, Js 3:15; (7) b, Js 3:3; (8) c, Js 3:10; (9) b, Js 3:13; (10) d, Js 3:16; (11) masters, Js 3:1; (12) great, fire, Js 3:5; (13) tongue, tame, poison, Js 3:8; (14) pure, Js 3:17; (15) small, Js 3:3.]

## VI. Lessons &amp; Applications.

1. **...because ye ask not** (Js 4:2). One big problem in living the Christian life is that we often fail to present our petitions to the Lord in prayer. Then the other major problem is seen in the next verse—we often pray “not in faith,” i.e., not according to the Lord’s will. How important it should be for us to concentrate more on proper prayer!
2. **...giveth grace to the humble** (Js 4:6). Surely we can learn from God’s past dealing with mankind the value of humility. This principle has ALWAYS been true!
3. **Resist the devil...** (Js 4:7). It requires a great amount of strength to resist the devil! We must follow the example of our Lord (1 Pet 2:21 + Mt 4:1-11).
4. **Speak not evil one of another, brethren...** (Js 4:11). How important are these words! We must not be involved in the sort of censorious judgment which Jesus condemns in Matthew 7:1ff. This does not preclude all judging, however, in the same context Jesus warns that we must examine fruit (Mt 7:15-20).

5. ...**ye know not what shall be on the morrow...** (Js 4:14). Especially in our day of humanistic thinking (man is the measure of all things), we need to be reminded constantly about our own HUMANITY!

## VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

V V A N I S H E T H C D E R F V B G V F  
 T O D A Y X S W E D C V F R T G B N I Z  
 A Q W S X D E C V F R O Y G T Y H N F Z  
 W S X C D E R F V B Q T N A Z X C V T B  
 Y E K N O W N O T N I M J T U Y H B H E  
 G T R F V C T E D C C X O R I Q A Z E F  
 X S W E C A F R A T G B U J U N I A L I  
 C D O T H I S H C E A O G W S X U Y O L  
 C D E T R F C V M B P G H T Y H N E R R  
 M J R C D U X I C A V F T Q W A Z A D U  
 C O F R S T T G V T B G T N B U Y R W O  
 N H Y O U E Q A Z O C D O E R G S N I Y  
 N H T Y L W S X C N Q A S Z O V E Y L S  
 B N H T R F V C D W W S A Z G A L F L I  
 I V T B G T Y H N O S A Y C L D L V F T  
 N I G E T G A I N N B G T R L E D C E A  
 L C D E R F V B Q K A Z X V I N H V Y H  
 B G T Y R E D C X E Q A Z X W S I E D W  
 A P P E A R E T H Y V F T Y E L Q A Z X  
 V F R T G B N T O M O R R O W Q A D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

**James 4:13-15...** <sup>13</sup>Go to now, ye that say, **TO DAY** or **TO MORROW WE WILL GO INTO SUCH A CITY**, and **CONTINUE** there **A YEAR**, and **BUY** and **SELL**, and **GET GAIN**: <sup>14</sup>Whereas **YE KNOW NOT** what *shall be* on the morrow. For **WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?** It is even a **VAPOUR**, that **APPEARETH** for a **LITTLE TIME**, and then **VANISHETH** away. <sup>15</sup>For that ye **OUGHT TO SAY**, **IF THE LORD WILL**, we shall **LIVE**, and **DO THIS**, **OR THAT**.

James 4 (KJV)

**ACROSS**

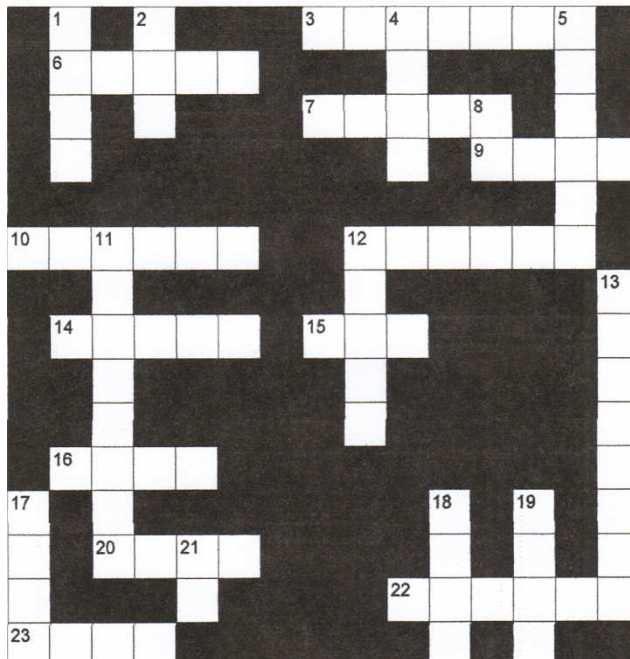
- 3. Some ask that they may \_\_\_\_\_ it upon their lusts.
- 6. War in your members.
- 7. Humble yourselves in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
- 9. The Scripture does NOT say in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10. God gives grace to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12. Double minded folk are to \_\_\_\_\_ their hearts.
- 14. If you \_\_\_\_\_ the law, you are not a doer of the law.
- 15. Let \_\_\_\_\_ be turned to heaviness.
- 16. In response to our humility, the Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ us up.
- 20. Some leave God out in plans to get \_\_\_\_\_.
- 22. Appears for a little time.
- 23. We shall \_\_\_\_\_ if it is the Lord's will.

is they \_\_\_\_\_ not.

- 4. Draw \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
- 5. Friendship with the world is this with God.
- 8. What we watch too much of!
- 11. Let laughter be turned to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12. God resists the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 13. There is one.
- 17. To rejoice in our boastings is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 18. Some plan a \_\_\_\_\_ ahead, leaving God out.
- 19. Knowing to do this, but not doing it is sin.
- 21. We ought to say \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord will...

**DOWN**

- 1. When we resist the devil he will.
- 2. A reason Christians have not



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