

"True Faith and the Believer's Relationship with the World"

James 4:1-12

Part 2

Introduction: As we pass through this life as believers we are in a constant spiritual battle. Satan and his demons are at work all the time in an attempt to keep God's people from being effective. One of his tools that he uses in an attempt to pull us away from the Lord is the world.

Now when I refer to the world I am talking about the world's system which is fueled by Satan and includes everything around us that is against God and His Word.

One of the philosophies of the world that is contrary to God's Word is "There is fulfillment in the things of this world". This is a lie that Satan promotes every minute of every day and it is a lie that the majority of the world's population has accepted as the truth. So what we see in our world today is that people give their entire lives to the mission of gathering things. They work overtime, they sacrifice time with their children, they sacrifice time with their spouse, they build bigger buildings to put things in and it just goes on and on. Then the person looks around and life is at the end and they realize they have spent their entire lives working for things that really mean nothing.

Solomon recorded some thoughts on this very thing.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-19

¹⁸ Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

¹⁹ And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.

Solomon realized everything that a man can gather in this life will be left to someone else and that someone else may be a fool and he will not take care of that which the man had gathered.

But I need to tell you that this is not the biggest tragedy that comes from getting caught up in this lie. The greatest tragedy is that many people spend their entire lives gathering things and they are so distracted they have no time to think about eternity and they die

without Jesus Christ and they go to hell. Many times they get a false sense of security from their things and they see no need for God in their lives.

Matthew 19:23-24

²³ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

The wealth of this world gives a person a false sense of security and they see no need for God. So Satan uses the lie that says, "Things will fulfill your life" to keep unsaved people from coming to Jesus Christ.

But the lie is also believed by many believers.

There are people who are born again and they get caught up in the world's system and when a believer gets caught up in the philosophies of this world's system many times all of their energies are spend chasing after things. Therefore they have no time or energy to use the spiritual gifts which God has given to them. They are too busy with the world to get involved for God.

But when a believer gets caught up in the world's system it affects their lives in many areas and that is what James addresses here in the verses that are before us.

**I. The Results of Worldliness
Part 2**

I want to quickly review what we looked at last week and then move on to the next thought.

Last week we look at verses 1 and 2a.

A. Worldliness hinders our social life.

Notice James 4:1

James started this section with 2 questions about the lives of his readers. There were battles within their lives and these battles were in every area of their lives, at home, at work and in their worship.

Now these battles were a result of an inward conflict between the Holy Spirit indwelling them and the old nature which was a part of them. Deep down inside they were miserable because they were trying to find contentment and satisfaction in the world, and here in this particular case it was in the THINGS of this world.

The 2nd question in verse 1 tells us that they desired pleasure from the things of the world. That is exactly what the word "lusts" mean. Now last week I told you that when a believer turns to the world's system they will be miserable and this misery will manifest itself in many areas of that individual's life. That brings us to the 2nd verse of the chapter.

Notice James 4:2

Here we see in the first part of this verse that their "friendship" with the world affected their social life. When they began to lust after things and could not get what they desired they then became bitter with people who had what they desired. James tells them they were guilty of murder.

Now they were not carrying out the actual act of murder but they were developing a hatred for those who had what they desired and James knew that if we have hatred toward other people then we are guilty of murder within our hearts.

1 John 3:15a

¹⁵ Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer:

Now we come to where we stopped last week.

B. Worldliness hinders our prayer life.

Notice James 4:2-3

I want to focus upon the end of verse 2 and all of verse 3. James makes 2 statements here that pertain to the prayer life of his readers.

He says, "Ye have not because ye ask not".

He says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss".

This makes me ask, "What is James saying to these people?" Let me explain what James is saying to these people who were caught up in living for the things of this world. He was telling them their drive to attain things had completely distorted their prayer life. Let me show you.

1. They had neglected prayer.

This is what James means when he says, "Ye have not because ye ask not". They had become so busy in their lives living for the things of the world that they had pushed their personal time with God completely to the back burner.

Application:

This is exactly what happens with believers who get caught up in the world. Your personal time with God gets pushed out of your life. You spend no time with God in the morning and many times you are so busy at night and then so tired that you have no time then for prayer.

If you do try to pray your mind is so consumed with your busy schedule that you cannot even focus upon God.

Let me just say that the time you spend in prayer is a really good indicator of how close you are to God. The further away you drift from God the less time you will spend alone with Him.

Personal time with God should be the very top priority in our lives.

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ *Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.*

³⁹ *And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

⁴⁰ *But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.*

⁴¹ *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:*

⁴² *But one thing is **needful**: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

Jesus said that one thing is NEEDFUL and that is time sitting at His feet. The word "NEEDFUL" means exactly what it says. The point is we desperately need time alone with

God and when we entrapped in the system of the world we will find ourselves not even interested in prayer and when we are we will be unable to focus.

Not let me show you another way their prayer lives had been affected.

2. They prayed for things just for the reason of satisfying their desires for pleasure.

Notice James 4:3

The word "amiss" means that when they did pray they prayed for things that they which they wanted for their own selfish desires.

When I read this verse I see another way in which their entanglement with the world affected them. They had lost sight of what it was that they were to be living for. Their prayers were all about personal satisfaction. They were living and praying as though this world was their home.

Application:

When believers get entangled in the world system the very same thing can happen today. You can lose sight of the fact that this world is not your home. You begin to live for what this world has to offer and then when you pray your prayers are all about asking for that which your flesh desires to have.

Now I want to remind you again that James had in his mind the Sermon on the Mount and when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount He taught about prayer. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave an outline which we are to use to build our prayers upon.

Matthew 6:9-15

⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

This is not a prayer that Jesus gave to His disciple to repeat over and over again. This is an outline to build our prayers upon. I want you to notice the outline.

1. We are to pray that God's name would be magnified in our lives.
2. We are to pray for His Kingdom to be advanced.
3. We are to pray for His will to be done in our lives.
4. We are to ask for our DAILY NEEDS.
5. We are to ask forgiveness for our sins to restore fellowship.
6. We are to pray that God would lead us down a path that would honor Him.

Then there are 2 footnotes which Jesus gave.

¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is the outline that our prayers are to be built upon. If we look closely at this outline the focus of our prayer is to be God and His Kingdom and His will.

When we get entangled in the world we lose sight of the fact that we are to be seeking God's Kingdom.

Conclusion:

Let me bring this down to a conclusion and apply it to 2 different groups of people.

1. The Believer

You may be just like the people James was writing to. You know Jesus as your Savior but Satan has used the world to pull you down a path where you are so busy and distracted that you have no time for God.

Deep down inside you are miserable and now you know it is because you have allowed Satan to use the world to distract you.

I say to you today that you need to make the changes to get back into fellowship with the Lord.

2. The Unbeliever

You may be someone who has never been saved. You know that you need to come to Christ but right now is not a good time. You are so busy in all you do but you have determined as you get older that you will one day get saved.

If that is you then you have bought into 2 of Satan's lies.

Lie #1 - Satan has convinced you that the things of this world will give you peace and contentment.

Lie #2 - You have believed the lie that says you have lots of time left.