

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

James 4:1-12

Part 3

Introduction: The past 2 weeks we have been working our way through James 4:1-12 and in this section James is warning his readers about getting entangled in the world. Now apart from this text there are many other passages which instruct you and I who know Jesus Christ that we are to live a life separated from the world.

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

¹⁶ *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

¹⁷ *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Colossians 2:6-8

⁶ *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

⁷ *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

⁸ *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

The word "rudiments" means: **primary and fundamental principles of any art, science, or discipline.**

The idea here is that we are to walk in the new life we have in Jesus Christ and not in the teachings and the philosophies of this world.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

These are just a few of the references along with what we are looking at in James 4. Now we have already consider 2 of the points which James makes about what happens when the believer gets caught up in the world's system.

I. The Results of Worldliness

Part 3

A. Worldliness hinders our social life.

Notice James 4:1-2

B. Worldliness hinders our prayer life.

Notice James 4:3

It will keep you from spending time in prayer and it will cause you to pray for that which will appeal to your own selfish desires. Let me give you a thought about prayer that I did not think about last week.

Prayer is not me asking God to align His will with mine. Prayer is me aligning my will with God's will.

When we are entrapped in the ways of the world we lose sight of how we are to pray just as these people did that James was writing to.

This now brings us to the next point which James makes.

C. Worldliness hinders our fellowship with God.

Notice James 4:4

There are two points I desire for you to see here.

1. **When we align ourselves with the world then we are working against the Kingdom of God.**

Remember last week I reminded you of what Jesus said about how we are to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

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 was an outline given by our Lord for us to attach our prayers to. In verse 10 Jesus reminds us that we are to pray for the kingdom of our Lord to come. In other words we are to pray for the advancement of the kingdom.

When we join up with the world we are not living to advance the kingdom but we are living in a way that hinders the growth of the kingdom. When we get entangled in the world's system we join sides with the enemy. Let me ask a question that may be in your mind, "How can I know if I am joined up with the world?"

Let me give you something to examine your life with.

Listen to the words of William Dawes:

"If, therefore, we find our thoughts and affections chiefly taken up with the things of this world; if the main bent of all our studies and endeavors tends this way; if for the sake of these things we attempt such difficulties, run such hazards, as we would not for the sake of anything else whatsoever, not even for God's and our own soul's sake, venture upon; if our hearts are rather set upon making ourselves or our children rich and great than wise and good; if we suffer ourselves to give way in the cause of God and religion, and let this man's greatness and the other man's wealth, this secular inconvenience and that consideration of worldly gain, keep us from doing our duty for God or frighten us from opposing wickedness — if this, or anything like this, be our case, there is no room left to dispute what principle we are governed by, but by the world, which so plainly shows its authority over us."

When we are entangled in the world we are not seeking the kingdom of God but instead we are seeking those things which have no eternal value. Let me give you something else to consider. When we live for the world we are teaching others with our life style that the

things of this world are more important than serving God. Is it any wonder that James says to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God?

But he says something else in this verse also which helps us to see how serious it is to join up with the world.

Notice James 4:4

2. When we align ourselves with the world we are being unfaithful to God.

He refers to those who are friends of the world as adulterers and adulteresses. Those of us who are born again believers are the bride of Christ. We are in what is known as a "betrothal" period or an engagement period. After the rapture and before the return of Jesus Christ there will be a wedding ceremony in heaven.

Let me show you a picture of the church at the end of the Great Tribulation period.

Revelation 19:6-8

⁶ *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

⁷ *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

⁸ *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

The church here is referred to as the WIFE which means the wedding has already happened. But at this time we are in the engagement period. We are waiting for the return of the Groom/Jesus to catch His bride away. Therefore we are to be FAITHFUL as we wait. We are to be committed to our Lord while we wait. To join up with the world is the same as adultery in the eyes of God.

James 1:27

²⁷ *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

The word "unspotted" means "to be above reproach".

II. The Rebuke**Notice James 4:5**

Here is a verse that there are many different opinions about. It is difficult to grasp what James is saying here. But let me tell you how I understand this verse.

Let me remind you that the believers who James is writing to are being controlled by lust and envy. They have allowed themselves to be lured into the world's system and they have come to believe that a life full of the things of this world will bring contentment and happiness. But they are unable to find the contentment that the world promises. Therefore, they desire more and more and they are unable to get what it is that they desire. They have come to envy those who have what they desire and have even come to hate those who had what they desired. Their lust was taking them further and further away from God.

When James writes the words of 4:5-6 he is attempting to wake them up spiritually speaking.

Verse 5 could be understood to read, "Do you think what the scriptures have to say about this is a mere formality? Or do you imagine that this spirit of passionate jealousy is the Spirit he has caused to live in us?"

The answer to this question would be, "Absolutely not!!" This was not the work of the Holy Spirit. This was the result of being controlled by the flesh and not by the Spirit of God.

Let me explain something to you. The moment we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior we are given the Holy Spirit. He comes and He indwells us.

Ephesians 1:12-14

¹² *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

¹³ *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

¹⁴ *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

At the same time we must remember that we still have the sin nature also. Therefore, there are 2 natures within us. The Divine nature and the sin nature and this causes a battle within us. The Divine nature longs to follow God but the sin nature/flesh lusts after the things of this world. Let me show you a picture of the 2 natures within us.

Genesis 25:20-23

²⁰ *And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.*

²¹ *And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

²² *And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.*

²³ *And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

The 2 babies battled within her. This is a picture of the believer who has 2 natures and they battle within us. Now Moses tells us here that the ELDER was to serve the YOUNGER. This was the opposite of the way in which families operated. Normally the younger served the elder. But the point here is this: this is a picture of how the Christian life is to be led.

The ELDER nature in us is the sin nature. We have had it since we were born. The YOUNGER nature in us is the Divine nature. Therefore the sin nature must submit to the Divine nature within us. When this does not happen we are then controlled by the flesh. That is exactly what had happened to the believers James had written to.

Application:

Let me put this in a way that you can better understand. There are 2 natures within us and each one desires to control us. The sin nature longs for the world and all the world has to offer. The Divine nature longs to serve and to follow God. We must chose on a daily basis which "captain" we are going to submit to.

Now you may respond by saying the longing for the world are so strong it is hard to resist. That brings us to the last verse we shall look at today.

Notice James 4:6

We will look deeper at this next week but let me just give you an overall view of this verse. When we surrender to the leading of the Holy Spirit God then gives to us the grace to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The more we say NO to the sin nature the more grace we are given and the end result is we learn to be content with what God has given to us.

Conclusion:

Philippians 4:11-13

¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.