

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

James 4:1-12

Part 4

Introduction: In our study of the book of James we have been looking recently at chapter 4:1-12 and in these verses James is warning his readers about the dangers of getting entangled in the world.

In James 4:1-2 he explained that because they were entangled in the world they it was effecting their relationship to other people.

Notice James 4:1-2

Then in James 4:2-3 he pointed out to them that their entanglement in the world had a major effect on their prayer lives.

Notice James 4:2-3

Sometimes they did not pray and when they did pray they prayed only for the things they thought would satisfy their personal desires of the flesh.

James then went on to explain to his readers that getting entangled in the world is very serious because it causes the believer to align him or her self against God.

Notice James 4:4

Here in this verse James tells us that when we align ourselves with the world that we are actually aligning ourselves against God. You see the world's philosophies and the world's teachings are fueled by the Devil and they are aimed at leading people against God.

Let me explain something that we many times lose sight of. Satan knows that his time on this earth is limited and he knows what the Bible says about his end which is recorded in the book of Revelation. But he does not believe what it says. He will do his best to fight against God right to the very end. Now he does not know when the timing of God's plan so as we move closer to the end of this age Satan will be gathering all the people he can to fight against Jesus when he returns. Since he is the Prince of this world we can be sure that the teachings and the philosophies of this world are all designed to rally people against God. He is planning for the end.

So when a believer aligns themselves with the world they are standing against God.

Now last week we looked at James 4:5-6a but there was something I had overlooked last week that I want to show you. It is something that helps us to see the seriousness of aligning ourselves with the world's system. Now before I point this out let me just remind you of something. These people whom James is writing to had allowed themselves to believe the teaching of the world that says, "The more STUFF you have the better your life will be." That is one of the teachings of this world. They had bought into that teaching and they seemed to be sold out to living for the personal pleasures of the flesh or the lusts of the flesh.

Now let me explain what that does to a believer's life. It will cause you to use all of your time and energy to work for your own personal desires. Remember what Jesus commanded us to do in Matthew 6?

Matthew 6:24, 33

²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

*³³ But seek ye **first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

We are commanded to seek FIRST the kingdom of God. You cannot do that when you are entangled in living for the world.

Now let me show you something else that James had said.

Notice James 4:4

After the message last week I walked away and I asked myself why James used the terms "adulterers and adulteresses". Why did he not just refer to them as unfaithful to God?

Let us remember that James is writing to Jewish believers and he wants them to see how serious this matter of getting entangled in the world is so when he uses these 2 words it would have went through them like a knife. Their minds would have went directly to the Old Testament.

Leviticus 20:10

¹⁰ And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Now before we move on I really desired to help you to see how serious this matter is. So today we are going to look at a real life occasion of what happens when a believer get caught up in the system of the world.

Let's turn this morning to Genesis 12.

Now let me explain something to you before we look at this passage. In the Old Testament Egypt is always a picture of the world and all of its systems. In Genesis 12 Abram has been called from Ur to follow God to the land of Canaan. When he arrived at Canaan God chose to test his faith with a famine. It was then that Abram made the decision to turn to the world.

I. Turning to the World.

Notice Genesis 12:8-13

Mark verse 8 for it will be important here in a moment. When the famine came Abram never sought God's direction but he chose to take all his people and go down to Egypt.

Now let me tell you why this happened. He did not fully trust God from the start.

Years later when Abraham had an encounter with King Abimelech he tried to pass Sarah off as his sister. God revealed the entire thing to Abimelech and he questioned Abraham.

Genesis 20:10-13

¹⁰ And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

¹¹ And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

¹² And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

¹³ And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

Abraham was not convinced that God could keep him safe and secure therefore he left home with a backup plan.

Application:

Let me just say that when a believer turns to the world it is because he or she does not believe that God can provide what the need for contentment and satisfaction. For that reason they go out into the world.

II. The Consequences.

1. No testimony.

Notice Genesis 12:14-16

When Abram gets to Egypt Pharaoh takes Sari into his harem. Then Pharaoh begins to pour the blessings upon Abram.

Application:

Let me point something out here if I could. Many believers get involved in the world and they makes lots of money and they see that as "God's" blessing o them and they are deceived into thinking that material wealth is a sign of God's APPROVAL. Just in case that is the way that you think let me remind you that Abram was completely outside the will of God and he received all of these blessings. They were NOT from God!!!

Satan was behind the wealth which Pharaoh poured out to Abram. Why would Satan do this?

1. It is deceitful.
2. It makes it far more difficult to walk away.

Notice Genesis 12:17-20

God would not permit his servant to live in the world. So God began to move and he revealed to Pharaoh the TRUTH through the plagues. Pharaoh then rebukes God's man for how he has been acting.

Application:

There are few things as embarrassing as when God's people must be corrected by the people of the world.

Let me show you what God told Abimelech in a dream concerning Abraham.

Genesis 20:7

⁷Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

Abraham the prophet was kicked out of the world by Pharaoh.

This ruined his testimony. The same will happen to us if we get entangled in the world.

2. Wasted time.

Notice Genesis 13:1-4

Remember Genesis 12:8? Here we see he ended up back at the same place. Here is the point that I want you to see: Abram's time in Egypt was all wasted time. He ended up back at square one after it was all over.

Application:

This is exactly what happens when a believer gets caught up in the world. All the time spent in the world is wasted time. Let me show you something that James wrote.

James 4:14

¹⁴Whereas 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.

Our window of opportunity to serve God is very small compared to eternity.

3. The influence.

When Abram went to Egypt he took many people with him and one of the people was his nephew named Lot. After they were kicked out of the world Lot's herdmen and Abram's herdmen began to enter into strife.

Notice Genesis 13:7

Abram then gave to Lot the choice of the land and I want you to see what he choose.

Notice Genesis 13:10-12

Lot moved toward Sodom because it reminded him of EGYPT.

Notice Genesis 14:12

Here we see that Lot now dwelled in Sodom.

Notice Genesis 19:1

Here we see that he was in the gate of Sodom. This means that he was involved in the politics of the city. He kept going deeper and deeper into the city of sin.

This all came about because he got a taste of the world and when he choose where to live he chose Sodom because it reminded him of Egypt.

Application:

If you and I chose to get involved in the world I can assure you that it will not only affect you but it will affect your family. You may expose your children to something that will later lead them deep into a life of sin.

This is why it is so dangerous to get entangled in the world.

4. The Baggage

Notice Genesis 16:1

Conclusion:

I will leave you with a quote from Spurgeon:

God has not made this world to be a nest for us, and if we try to make it such for ourselves, he plants thorns in it, so that we may be compelled to mount and find our soul's true home somewhere else, in a higher and nobler sphere than this poor world can give.