

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

James 4:1-12

Part 5

Introduction: Today we return back to our study in the book of James. We have been in chapter 4:1-12 for 5 weeks. In this section James is addressing the subject of worldliness. We have looked the past 5 weeks at the dangers which face the believer when he or she drifts away from God and gets entangled in the world.

We looked at how being entangled in the world effects our:

1. Relationship with others.
2. Prayer life.
3. Our fellowship with God.

Then last week we went back to *Genesis* and we followed Abraham on his journey into the world. The consequences were devastating to him, to Lot, to his family, to his testimony, and even to us today.

Now as we continue in our study today we are going to see how to overcome the lure of the world. The Jewish believers whom James wrote to were entangled in the world's system and therefore James has written to them to show them how to get free from the grip of the world.

I. Understand that God has given the grace for you to walk away.

Notice James 4:6

To fully understand this verse there are some other thoughts which we need to consider.

- a. The first word of this verse introduces a contrast. The contrast is between the powerful temptation of the world and the abundant grace of God.

Notice James 4:5

This verse 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?"

Here is the bottom line with these people, they were not walking in the power of the Holy Spirit but were walking to fulfill the desires of the flesh.

The Holy Spirit was not causing the envy and jealousy nor was He leading them into temptation.

Instead the Holy Spirit was patiently waiting to give them the grace needed to walk away from the world. But there are certain responsibilities which the believer has before the grace is given.

In verse 6 James quotes Proverbs 3:34.

Proverbs 3:34

³⁴ *Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.*

So in this verse James is calling for them to be humble.

This brings us to the second thought we need to understand.

- b. **There are different baits which are used to lure the believer into the world.**

Let me show you what I mean.

1 John 2:15-16

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.*

Here is BAIT that the enemy will use to lure you into the world.

- a. The lust of the flesh.
- b. The lust of the eyes.
- c. The pride of life.

If you are entangled in the world then you can be sure these 3 baits have been used to lure you in.

Notice James 4:7a

Here James calls on his readers to submit to God. So let me pull all of this together so you can see what James is saying here. When he calls the readers to SUBMIT to God he is telling them to accept what God had given to them and be content with God's provisions.

Remember they were desiring to have things which others had but they did not. There was no contentment. James is telling them to accept what God had given to them and humble themselves. Let me show you something that will help you to better grasp this.

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

This was written to believers who were facing great persecution under Nero. They were to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. This means that God permitted the persecution for a purpose.

If we carry this thought into the book of James we can understand that whatever these people had or did not have it was what God desired for them. They were to submit to God's will for their lives.

Application:

This is also true of our lives. We need to be content with what God has provided for us and understand that His will is best. Instead of getting entangled in the world trying to achieve something which God never intended for us to have, we should submit to God and accept what we have with thanksgiving. You may not have what your neighbor has but you have what God desires for you to have.

Back to James; not only are submit to God but we are also to resist Satan.

Notice James 4:7b

This is a very interesting statement. Remember I told you there were 3 baits that are used to lure the believer into the world? They are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These are the baits of the devil. Let us also remember that Satan is the prince of the power of the air. Therefore when a believer steps into the world he or she is stepping into the realm which Satan controls.

Now let me take a moment to explain something to you. Not everything in the world is sinful and evil. Some things are very useful in our lives but we must keep it all under control. There is a great picture in Deuteronomy which will help us with this. In Deuteronomy 20 God gave a 2 part military manual to Israel for when they would enter into Canaan. Let me show you part 2 first.

Deuteronomy 20:16-18

¹⁶ But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

¹⁷ But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

¹⁸ That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

The people of the cities that were to be divided for an inheritance were to be completely destroyed. If not Israel would fall to their sins. Israel failed to do this and that is exactly what happened.

But there was another part of this military manual.

Deuteronomy 20:10-15

¹⁰ When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

¹¹ And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

¹² And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

¹³ And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

¹⁴ But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

¹⁵ Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

The cities that were far off were to be approached with an offer of peace. If they accepted the offer they were then to take the people and allow them to be servants. The people would be very useful.

But if the people resisted they were to lay siege to the city and when God delivered the city into their hands they were to kill all the men but the women and the children as well as livestock were to be taken and used by Israel.

Application:

Let me bring this into our lives. There are things in this world that we should have absolutely nothing to do with. This would be anything that takes us away from God. These things are to be cut off from our lives just as the people of the close cities were to be put to death.

There are also other things in this world that can be useful. But we must always keep them under a very close watch. If they begin to present a danger to us in the sense that they start to control us we must cut them out of our lives. These things can take us away from where we should be down a path that can cause pain and damage.

Illustration:

Story of the man with the new work boots.

Listen to what I am about to tell you! There are things in this world that are not sinful but if we are not careful they can become idols. This can be things like:

1. Hobbies
2. Sports
3. Possessions
4. Exercise
5. Money
6. Work

This is a few but you get the idea. These things are not sinful but if we are not careful they can become idols. That is where James 4:7 comes in. James tells his readers to resist the Devil. I have said this before but I will say it again. When something becomes an idol

then demonic spirits will attach themselves to the idol and they will begin to control your mind.

Let me show you something that the writer of Hebrews said.

Hebrews 3:12-13

¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

The sin spoken of here is the sin of unbelief. But we need to know that all sin is deceitful. If you get entangled in something that becomes an idol it will deceive you. It will take you into areas where you will eventually wish that you had never been. The demonic world will work through the idol you have allowed in your life. You will then be deceived by the sin. This deception can come in many ways. I have seen people throw away all they had with their family to chase an idol.

We must resist the Devil and we do that by staying away from that which begins to control us.

Conclusion:

Let me pull this all together. God has given to us what it is that He desires for us to have. He withholds things from us because He knows if we had more it could cause problems in our lives which would lead us away from Him. So we must humble ourselves and be content with what we have.

There will be times when we are tempted with the world. We must remember that God has given to us the grace to walk away.

1 John 4:4

⁴ Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

We must also rest in the promise of James 4:7 and it is this, when we resist the Devil he will flee from us. If you are caught up in the world then you need to cut the ties.

Let me leave you with a verse to consider.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: