

# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## *“Friendship with the World”*

Scripture Reading: JAMES 4:1-5

- ) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
- ) **SLIDES 7-8.** Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 9.** Today we continue in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #20. I have titled today’s message *“Friendship with the World”* (4:4).
- ) Quite often, and maybe most often, we think of Jesus Christ in the light of being our Lord and our Savior. Without His sacrifice and resurrection from the grave, we have no forgiveness of our sins. We have no salvation. We have no hope. And it’s OK to know these things and have assurance of our eternal life.
- ) But too often this is all we dwell on. A Savior. But one area where James had a real advantage was growing up with his older half-brother Jesus. James heard His words. James watched His actions. James saw how Jesus interacted with other people—those who loved Him and those who hated Him.
- ) James had to know there was something different about his older brother. And that’s the part of Jesus we need to remember. His life. And that’s the part of Jesus James wants us to remember and imitate. And not just James, but other NT authors also. Let’s look at a few Scripture passages.
- ) **SLIDE 10.** 1 COR 13:1. The apostle Paul wants people at the church in Corinth to imitate him, but know that Paul is also on a journey of imitating Christ. So, Paul says, imitate Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 11.** What does it mean to imitate? Webster. And what the apostle Paul is saying is that we need to follow the pattern (the example) of Jesus Christ and how He lived.

- ) **SLIDE 12.** 1 THESS 1:6-7. In this passage, the apostle Paul uses the past tense—the people in the church at Thessalonica became imitators of the Lord.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** 3 JOHN 1:11. Here the apostle John throws a blanket statement on how we act and speak. Imitate what is good. And we know we need to imitate Christ.
- ) Yes, Jesus is our Savior. Yes, Jesus has forgiven us of our sins. Yes, Jesus has given His elect eternal life. But what about our lives? Do our lives follow the example of Jesus? Are we imitators of Jesus Christ? Well, James says we need to be.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** So, what was going on with these brethren James is referring to? JAMES 4:1. There are quarrels and conflicts among the brethren. These are not the actions of people who should be imitating Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** What is causing these quarrels and conflicts? JAMES 4:1. Your pleasures. In other words, brethren, you are allowing your old sinful nature to control you. These are not the actions of people who should be imitating Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 16.** What are these pleasures in particular? JAMES 4:2. Lust and envy. Two of the seven deadly sins. These are not the actions of people who should be imitating Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 17.** Why is this happening? JAMES 4:1. The Christian has a war going on within. And when James refers to members, he does not mean church members. He means within the members of our own bodies. The war is our sinful nature (the human condition) vs the Holy Spirit.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** The **WAR** that rages inside us is our sinful nature battling the Holy Spirit. Our sinful nature still wants what it's always wanted. And it never wants what is good.
- ) **SLIDE 19.** The apostle Paul understands this war. ROMANS 7:19-20. Sure, we can blame our sinful nature.

- ) Remember, our sinful nature will never go away. But this is never an excuse to sin, but we now understand how and why it happens. Let's move on.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** Can these "pleasures" lead to other sinful actions? JAMES 4:2. In this case, this lust and envy are leading to murder, fighting, and quarrels.
- ) Lust and envy. These two sins can have a very powerful grip on a person. I watch a lot of the ID Channel and many people end up missing or dead because of lust and envy.
- ) **SLIDE 21.** Why does lust and envy have such a powerful grip on these brethren? JAMES 4:2. It's because we can't get what we want.
- ) Why do babies cry and throw tantrums? Because mommy and daddy do not give them everything they want. Why are there murders, fights, and quarrels? Because adults do not get their lust and envy satisfied. Again, these are not the actions of people who should be imitating Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 22.** JAMES 4:2. At first glance, it may appear that these brethren are not getting their lust and envy and pleasures satisfied because they are not asking for it. This is certainly one verse that can easily be taken out of context. We better connect v3 along with v2.
- ) **SLIDE 23.** JAMES 4:2-3. Wrong motives. We do not and cannot ask God for things that only satisfy our own sinful carnal pleasures. And in particular we would never ask God to satisfy our sinful desires of lust and envy.
- ) It's as if we are saying: "*Lord, I really love that new car that the Jones' just bought. I want one just like it. Would you give me one like that please?*" This is not the prayer of people who should be imitating Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 24.** We must never ask God for things that will only satisfy our **CARNAL** pleasures.

- ) And we need to be careful when we quote “*We have not because we ask not*” because we better not be asking for things to satisfy the flesh.
- ) As we read our Bibles, we have the tendency of thinking that the beginning of one chapter is a separate context from the chapter before it. Many times that is true.
- ) But sometimes the chapter breaks are not placed in the best spots. And I think this is one of those times. Why? Because what James is teaching at the end of chapter 3 applies in the same context to what we read here in chapter 4.
- ) **SLIDE 25.** Let’s put JAMES 3:17-18 together with JAMES 4:1. He wants the brethren to ask for wisdom and that wisdom is sown in peace. And the very next verse (4:1) he talks about quarrels and conflicts.
- ) Maybe if these brethren asked for wisdom with the right motives (in faith and without doubting) instead of asking for things that are carnal and sinful with the wrong motives, they would receive and receive generously.
- ) **SLIDE 26.** Let’s finish up. JAMES 4:4. It’s test time once again. Which is it? Are you a friend of the world, or are you a friend of God? You can’t have it both ways.
- ) **SLIDE 27.** LUKE 16:13. So, which master are you going to serve? God or money? God or lust? God or envy? God or the worldly system? Your words and actions say a lot about your choice.
- ) I said this earlier in this study. We know that it is our faith that saves us, not our actions and our words. We are saved by grace through faith and not by works. Right? But James says that our actions and our words will be the proof of a person becoming a new creation in Christ. Remember, for the Christian, the old has gone and the new has come.

- ) This entire Book of JAMES is one that challenges our response to our faith to prove if it is genuine or not by our actions and our words. As Martin Luther said: "*We are saved by faith alone. But not by a faith that is alone.*"
- ) Two weeks ago I spoke a message about a liberal anti-god movement that wants to shove its anti-biblical agenda down the throats of Christianity. And then, when Christians do not comply but would rather follow the Word of God, we are the ones who are the "*haters.*"
- ) People and churches and denominations who have bought into this anti-god agenda have become friends with the world.
- ) **SLIDE 28.** Just know this. JAMES 4:4.
- ) The Word of God tells us that friendship with the world is hostility towards God. And when we befriend the world, we become an enemy of God. Not my words. God's words. Looks like we all need to make a choice. Let's be imitators of Christ because the Christian has the mind of Christ.

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