

March 9, 2014

Identifying Our Source of Hope James 4:1-5

All Stand and Read Scripture

James 4:1-5

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

4 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?

INTRODUCTION:

Source of Our Hope?

You might be wondering, why is this message entitled “**Identifying Our Source of Hope**”? Aren’t the scriptures talking about internal **fighting** and **quarreling in the church**? The word **Hope** is not even in the verses.

As we go through the scriptures from James this morning, let’s **consider** what he is really trying to tell us here in these passages about how we are to **be living our Christian lives**.

Prayer

The book of James is very **fascinating** to me because of the **straight forward approach** he uses to help us **mature in Christ**. It is my favorite book in the New Testament.

I want to go back with you when you first accepted Christ as your Savior and was immersed with Him in Baptism. This is a time that is no doubt indelibly etched into your mind. You can no doubt remember **where you were baptized**,

who baptized you,

and approximately **when you were baptized**, if not the exact date.

This may be one of the reasons God **instituted** baptism for the believer. That we would have a precise moment in our life that we can **reflect** back to when we accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior.

When we accepted Christ:

- We had read and **Heard** the Word of God (the Bible).
- We were convicted by the Holy Spirit to **Believe** that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
- We understood that we were **sinners** and needed to **Repent** of our sins.
- We **Confessed** our sins to God and asked Him for His forgiveness.
- We were **Baptized** by immersion for the forgiveness of our sins and we received the gift of the Holy Spirit in our life.
- Then, we were to live a **New Life in Christ** giving up our worldly ways.

I would like to read two scriptures that expound on these steps.

ACTS Chapter 2.

It was the day of Pentecost.

Christ had been crucified and arisen from the dead.

God had prophesied in Joel 2: 28-32 that there would be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon mankind.

The prophecy came to pass and the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and the people there were hearing the apostles speak in their own language.

Can you imagine the confusion and amazement that must have existed at that time? There was no doubt that something wonderful was happening.

Peter preached and told the people there that:

- Jesus, whom they crucified, had risen from the dead.
- He wanted the Jews to know for certain that God had made Him both Lord and Christ.

Acts 2:36-42

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

³⁶Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” ⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. ⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Remember, when we accepted Christ and was immersed in baptism, we had one more thing that we must continue doing?

We were to live a new life in Christ giving up worldly things.
Let’s reread Acts 2:42.

⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

So baptism was **not the end all** to being saved. It was the beginning of a **new life in Christ**. So what does that new life in Christ entail?

Lets read

2 Corinthians 5:17

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

We will talk more about this later.

James wrote his book to the Jews who were being persecuted and had been scattered abroad. He wrote it to help **THEM know HOW to live as a NEW CREATURE in Christ**.

Last week we learned to live by God’s Wisdom. As humans, all of us at some point have no doubt asked ourselves, “What is the purpose of life”. Without knowing “**Godly Wisdom**” we have to turn to the **wisdom of man** for answers. Don’t waste your time on “**flesh pleasing**” worldly advice.

In order to know how to live our life for Christ, we must have a **source of wisdom**. That “source of wisdom” is the Bible. The Bible consists of 66 books written by 40 authors inspired by God over a period of thousands of years.

James is now going to tell us where we need to place our HOPE in our walk with Christ.

BODY:

I. What Causes Fights Among You?

Verses 1-3.

Lets read verse 1 one more time.

James 4:1-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

4 What is the **SOURCE** of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the **SOURCE YOUR PLEASURES** that wage war in your members?

James is attacking the SOURCE that is causing conflicts within the church

He told us in chapter 3 verse 16 he warned us of a worldly wisdom.

James 3:16

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

To put it bluntly, he says, it leads to fighting.

It is human nature to think that when a quarrel exists, that it always starts with someone else. But James is saying “No”, it is within us.

If we won't accept God's diagnosis, we won't accept God's cure.

James 4:2

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.

Do Christians lust for things? Do we covet?

My life would be better if I had THAT or if I had HIM or HER or if I had THIS change or if I had THAT change.

Has this lusting caused you to do murder lately?

Sometimes we can get so wrapped up in WHAT we want that we would even commit murder.

It has happened several times in the Scriptures to some pretty righteous men. Consider David.

ILLUSTRATION:

II Samuel Chapter 11.

- David's army was at war.
- David saw Bathsheba bathing and noted that she was very beautiful in appearance.
- He laid with her and she became pregnant.
- David called Uriah, her husband from battle and tried to have him spend time with his wife in order to cover up the pregnancy.
- Uriah refused to stay with his wife while the rest of the army was fighting.
- David sent him to the front lines and had him abandoned, so he would be killed.

This shows the evil power of lust and covetousness even to the best of men. So is our fighting and quarreling when we disregard the wisdom of God over earthly pleasures.

James 4:2b

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

^{2b} You do not have because you do not ask.

James also tells us that the reason that we do not have is because we do not ask in prayer.

How is your prayer life? We are told that we are to be continuously in prayer—to keep our heart and minds on spiritual things.

James 4:3

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

What would a wrong motive in prayer sound like?

- God I need “X” to be happy.
- Aren’t you satisfied in Christ?
- Aren’t you grateful that although you were a sinner, **Christ died for you** to save you from your sins?
- Can’t you find contentment in everything that God has already given you? Can’t we find peace, contentment, and happiness in God where we are now instead of “needing” something else before we can finally be happy.
- This is an attitude on how God can serve me so I can have more pleasure and happiness in my life.

What would an unselfish prayer sound like?

- Thanking God for good He is and has been.
- Recognizing that God is able to meet our needs and knows what is best for us.
- Help us to understand what His will is and give us the power to do that.
- Help me live for your glory and to serve others.
- Our prayers should be about Him and not about Me.

II. Significance of the Choice.

James 4:4a

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God.

James is saying that if we try to get what we need from the world, we are committing adultery with God.

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it

never be! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." ¹⁷ But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. ¹⁸ Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

- Did you catch the significance of immorality? God says immorality is a sin against your own body. This sin causes us to have adultery with God.
- When we were saved from our sins, we were purchased with a great price...the crucifixion of Christ...do not let immorality take away your unity with the Lord.
- Are we here on this earth to get as much as we can for our happiness ...or...
- Are we here to take all that God gives us and use it for His glory and to reach others for Christ?

James 4:4b-5

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

When we live in this world for God
and accept what He gives us
and glorify His name for all He provides for us,
people will see a change in us that will allow us to reach out to them.

But, if we are trusting in the world for our hope and needs, the world will rightly consider that we are no different than them and we will not be able to reach out to them.

Exodus 20:1-5a

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²⁰ Then God spoke all these words, saying, ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³ “You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,

God is saying, “You were slaves of Egypt. I was the one who brought you out into this new land. So don’t turn right around and enslave yourself to these ridiculous trinkets that you make. I am God. I have shown you that I am God, so worship Me as God.”

They can worship anyone they want, but God does not want to share with anything. In the end He will receive all of the worship. Either they worship God, or they will be eternally cut off from God.

Can you see the importance of living for God while you are on earth? Anything else is a true waste of time and will have devastating results.

CONCLUSION:

A New Testament equivalent to what He said in the Old Testament would be paraphrased somewhat like this:

- “I am the Lord your God who saved you from the punishment your sins deserved.
- I did it with the blood of my own Son on a cross.
- With His blood I purchased you.
- I put My Holy Spirit in you so I could be your God and you could be My people.
- So, don’t look back to the world for things that I say I can provide for you.
- Don’t go back there, I just purchased you and got you away from the world.
- You should only be going back to show them what I have given you.
- We should be going only to Him and recognize that **He** is our **only HOPE** for salvation.

God knows what is best for us. How arrogant is it for us to doubt His wisdom.

The Family of God

I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God.
I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I’m part of the family, the family of God.