

March 16, 2014

Submitting to God **James 4:4-7**

All Stand and Read Scripture

James 4:4-7

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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”? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” ⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

INTRODUCTION:

This week I got to experience the power of God in my life. As most of you know, I had a mini stroke late Tuesday afternoon. I got to experience what Linda is going through with her stroke. My experience was, of course, much less severe and only lasted about twenty minutes plus however long it lasted while I was asleep.

I had overexerted myself in the previous two weeks and had had very little sleep. I did the funeral for Tim’s mom (Juanita Butterbaugh) on Tuesday and had a wonderful time being with Roy all day. We ate lunch together and delivered a TV to Mary that he had given to her. When I arrived home, I was totally exhausted and tried to go to sleep. I had trouble going to sleep, but finally did.

I woke up and felt something was not right, but being groggy, I couldn’t put my finger on it at first. I first noticed that when I lifted one of my hands, the muscle would quit working and my hand would suddenly just fall back on the bed. It happened several times. So I started wiggling my fingers and toes, moving my wrists and ankles, and bending my elbows and knees. All of them were working, but if I lost concentration on any of them, I would lose muscle control. Then a severe cramp or Charlie horse just above my right ankle started

about the size of an egg. I tried to stretch it out by flexing my leg and ankle and realized that I did not have enough muscle control to relax it.

Next, I remember trying to tell myself quietly out loud that something was not right, and I noticed that my speech was severely slurred.

I looked outside and noticed that it was somewhat dark and raining and thought to myself that I must have slept for quite a while. When I fell asleep it was warm, bright, and shiny.

I decided that I needed to stand up and work off the problem. When I tried to stand, I realized that I only had about 10-20% of my muscle strength and sat back down quickly. I felt my mind was still totally intact.

The thought suddenly came to mind that I might have just sung my last song and preached my last sermon with any clarity. I immediately prayed, “God, please do not let this be permanent.”

I got up and walked 45 feet out of the bedroom and down the hall to June in the family room. I was very unstable and had to hold on to furniture and the walls to make it. She called 911 and the ambulance arrived. They administered IV and oxygen and almost immediately I felt like I was 100% back.

I immediately thanked God for bringing me back out of the stroke! I was kept overnight for tests and was released late Wednesday afternoon.

I feel God was telling me that He still had plans for me and I should stop abusing my body.

I want to thank all of you for your prayers, emails, and cards. A special thank you goes out to Gene, Marylyn, and Carol, who drove to the emergency room to visit and pray for me.

Prayer

James has told us in the first few verses of chapter 4 that we must put our hope and trust in God and His perfect wisdom. He told us that the source of all of our quarrels and conflicts is that we are trying to live by worldly wisdom and selfish pleasures.

We were reminded that we should not be seeking for worldly things as they are only temporal. We must be seeking for God’s will in our lives and living for Him. We must have a prayerful life and pray with the right motives.

When we are being selfish, we think, “My life would be better if I just had “X’ in my life.” If I just had THIS or I just had THAT or I just had HIM or I just had HER, I would finally be happy.

James is asking, “Why can’t you find contentment in everything that God has already given you?” Why must there always be “one more thing” before I can be satisfied? Can’t we find peace, contentment, and happiness in God where we are now instead of “needing” something else?

This leads to our message this morning. It is entitled “**Submitting to God**”.

BODY:

What we will learn from verses 5-6 that we just read is that “**The Result of Friendship with the World Will Cause Conflicts, a Disregard for the Scriptures, and a Forfeiture of God’s Grace**”.

I. Worldly Pleasures Creates a Conflicts

Habitual friendships with the world, the world’s **philosophies**, the world’s **behaviors**, the world’s **ideals**, will bring us into conflicts.

A. Conflicts with Others

The chain of command for the Christian is

1. God
2. Others
3. Myself

The chain of command from a worldly perspective is completely backward.

1. Me
2. Myself
3. I

“I have to watch out for myself, because no one else is going to”

“I have to take care of ME”

We are living in a “ME” society. Since the focus is on you, it brings us into conflict with others.

B. Conflicts with Yourself

We have all of these inner battles and all of these inner desires.

When everything does not go our way,

- You have a hard time adjusting.
- You do not like it.

- You are not at peace with yourself.
- You are not at peace with others.
- These lusts, these desires, these plans are not fulfilled, so it leaves you frustrated.
- Instead of

Proverbs 3:5-6

King James Version (KJV)

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

⁶ In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

C. Conflicts with God

When you are a friend of the world, you are in conflict with God.

It doesn't matter if you are a believer or not. When you are living with your feet in the world, you are in conflict with God.

James 4:4-7

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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"? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." ⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

How do you know if you are a friend or an enemy of God? James tells us right here in the scripture.

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.

God likens **friendship to the world** as **spiritual adultery**. That is a serious thing. When you adopt worldly **philosophies**, the world's **behaviors**, and the world's **activities**, you are, like it or not, an enemy of God. It is not what I said, it is what James is telling us here.

We can't love the world and love God. We cannot ride the fence.

We have learned that friendship with the world puts us in conflict with others, yourself, and God. The second thing we learn is:

II. Worldly Pleasures Creates a Disregard for the Scriptures

James 4:5

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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 you are a friend of the world, you do not care what God's Word says.

When you are a friend of the world, you do not want people to tell you that you are sinning and backsliding.

It irritates you and that is why Christians who are living for the world are the most miserable people.

Why? Because they don't fit into the world and they don't fit in the Christian community. It agitates them when they are with good Christians. They are miserable!

There is no scripture in the Bible that says specifically “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? It is a general statement or a composite of what the scripture teaches.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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.

What James is saying would be paraphrased somewhat like this:

- “I am the Lord your God who saved you from the punishment that 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, God has every right to be zealous. We are not our own.
- We commit “adultery with God” by being a friend of the world.
- 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.

God knows what is best for us. How arrogant is it for us to doubt His wisdom. God does not want us to displace Him in our life. We belong to Him.

Exodus 34:14

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁴—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—

God expects us to faithful to Him.

God says, “I love you.” God says, “If you love me (do what?) KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

Being a friend to the world causes conflicts and makes us an enemy of God and we disregard His Word.

Now let’s look at the final thing that friendship with the world does.

II. Worldly Pleasures Forfeits the Grace of God and the Blessings of God

James 4:6

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

The word “opposed” is a military term meaning being fully armed for battle. And who is God set for “Battle” with: **HIS ENEMIES!** When you are in love with the world, you are forfeiting God’s grace and blessings.

If you are living for the world, you can’t expect God to give you blessings in your life and provide grace to serve Him because you are **NOT INTERESTED** in serving Him!

You are only interested in doing what pleases you. You are interested in the desires of your old nature and God cannot give you His grace because you are **proud. God resists the proud!**

The proud resists God and His Word and God resists the proud. In man's wisdom, he rejects the truth of God.

A good question would be "How can you claim to be a Christian and continue to do what you are doing?"

The answer: "I don't want to hear it!"

If we want to be a Child of God, we must do Godly things.

ILLUSTRATION:

I can claim to be a carpenter. But if I don't:

- Get up and go to work
- Read the plans
- Buy materials
- Layout the walls, joists, and rafters
- Saw the wood
- Hammer the nails

I will never build a house. Thus, I am not really a carpenter. Just having the knowledge of "How" to be a carpenter is not enough. A true carpenter is known by his finished houses.

If you are wrapped up in doing worldly ways, God is dressed in battle array against us. The worldly person is God's enemy. We must resist being proud.

The Result of Friendship with the World Will Cause Conflicts, a Disregard for the Scriptures, and a Forfeiture of God's Grace

James says God gives grace to the humble. Being humble and living by God's wisdom will allow us to be content with what God has provided for us. We know that He knows what is best for us and will supply our needs. He is an all-knowing God. Sometimes we have to go through tough times in order to draw closer to Him.

Philippians 4:11-13

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹¹ Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

CONCLUSION:

A final thought to consider: Are you worldly in your:

- Thinking
- Behavior
- Morality
- Dress
- Language

So what is the solution to being a humble servant of God?

James 4:7

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Do not think that you can be saved and spend eternity in heaven by just “Living a good life”. We are not saved by our works. We are saved by the grace of God. Our works will be an end result of our active faith. Our active faith will yield the fruit of the Spirit.

You will know a carpenter by his houses. You will know a Christian by his fruits.

Galatians 5:19-24

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

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.