

JAMES (4:2-10)

Lesson 19: Effective prayer, Spiritual Adultery, Grace to Help, Humility

15 May 2020

Vs 2 When men try to get what they want through their own means, they fail because they're allowing their lusts to direct their paths and their lusts only lead to strife, war, and more discontentment. God has all that we could ever want and need, but because men don't believe in God or because their faith is weak, they **"have not, because they ask not."**

Vs 3 What is your motive for praying? Is your prayer always selfish? Do you ever pray for the Lord's benefit and glory? Do you ever pray for the benefit of someone else? Your motive will determine whether or not you will receive what you ask for in prayer.

Vs 4 **"Ye adulterers and adulteresses."** Friendship with the world is equated to adultery against God. The relationship between Christ and His church is compared to the marriage of a man and a woman (Eph 5:31-32, 2 Cor 11:2). Believers are espoused to the Lord Jesus Christ. As such, we have vowed to love, honor, obey, etc. our Bridegroom. Therefore, any act of disloyalty (loving the things of the world in addition to Christ or more than Christ) is an act of adultery, a betrayal of trust.

"Whosoever WILL BE a friend of the world..." The trouble begins before you commit the actual crime. It begins with your will (the desire of your heart) to do wrong. (See 1 Tim 6:9 for similar wording). Until you are willing to refuse the friendship of the world and the lusts of your flesh, you cannot advance in your relationship with Jesus Christ because you are in disagreement with Him. Following Jesus Christ will cost you your relationship with the world, but the blessings far outweigh the costs.

Vs 5 Every word in the Bible is significant and important, never vain. The Bible says, **"The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy."** That's an important truth that applies to all men. We all have a spirit in us that makes us lust for what the other man has. Advertisers depend on this biblical fact. Their ad campaigns aim to make you want what you don't really need.

The only way to have victory over our sinful heart so we can control it is to believe what the Bible says about it. Sin must be preached against and exposed in the church so that it can be dealt with and defeated. In churches where the topic of sin is avoided, there can be no victory over sin.

Vs 6 God has more grace to give than I have lust (vs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in my members. Because of God's grace, I don't have to obey the lusts of my flesh or my sinful heart. His grace enables me to say no. Notice that God clearly showed us the problem first (vss 1-5), then He revealed the solution (vss 6-10).

"God resisteth the proud." The proud man will not get the victory over sin because he'll be left to deal with it by himself. **"But giveth grace unto the humble."** You've got to submit yourself to the Lord in humility and he will enable you to defeat the sin that troubles you.

Vs 7 **"Submit yourselves therefore to God."** Once you realize that you can't defeat sin without God, the next step is to submit yourself to Him; let him have control of your life.

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This is not instructing you to challenge or threaten the devil (see Exod 22:28, Jude 9). "Resist" means make sure you're strong in the things of God so the devil won't want to stick around. We strengthen ourselves through prayer (Mt 6:6, 26:36, Mk 1:35) and through confidence in the scriptures (Luke 4:4, Mt 4:4, Ps 119:28). The devil can't make you sin.

Vs 8 **"Draw nigh to God."** Surrender your will to Him and **"He will draw nigh to you."** Satan works through our self-will. If we give that up for God's will (Mt 26:39, Mk 14:36), Satan won't have anything to work with. **"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."** Inward motives affect outward actions. Strive to be clean, inside and out, if you want to be close to God.

Vs 9 **"Be afflicted and mourn..."** There is joy in the Lord (Rom 5:11), but first you've got to be sorry for your sin (Ezek 7:16, Eccl 7:2-5, Matt 5:4, Lk 6:21, 2 Cor 7:10-11).

Vs 10 **"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."**

John 3:30 John the Baptist humbled himself.

Luke 14:11 Jesus said the proud man will be brought down and the humble man will be lifted up.

Prov 4:7-8 Godly wisdom exalts Jesus Christ, not self. Godly wisdom will result in spiritual benefits.
