



PV Household Worship

April 9-14, 2018

❖ Daily Memory Verse:

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? James 4:1

❖ Song: I Am Thine O Lord

Monday, April 9, "War is costly." Read James 4:1-4

The human cost of World War I was enormous. More than 9 million soldiers and an estimated 12 million civilians died in the four-year-long conflict, which also left 21 million military men wounded. War is costly! When believers go to "war" with one another, the cost is also high. James writes, *"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?"* (4:1). In our own selfish pursuits, we sometimes battle without considering the price of on our witness to the world for Jesus or our broken relationships with one another. Perhaps that's why James preceded these words with the challenge, *"Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace"* (3:18). Do you recognize the problem within you? Apart from the work of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit there are passions within each of us that declare war. If we are to represent the Prince of Peace in our world, believers must stop fighting with one another and practice peace. We must realize the problem begins with us. When Christians submit their passions to the Prince of Peace we are at peace with one another and the world can more clearly see Jesus.

- What is the source of conflicts, fights, and wars according to James?
- How have you seen your own selfishness and strong passions within lead to conflict with others?
- Memory Verse James 4:1
- Prayer - Jesus, help me to see that peace with others means I must be content with Your will in my own heart.

Tuesday, April 10, "Me first." Read James 4:1-4

A man once asked his friend, *"What is your biggest problem?"* He replied, *"I see my biggest problem every day in the mirror."* I am referring to those *"me first"* passions that lurk in my heart. James 4:1, 2 says, *"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask."* The words *"your passions are at war within you"* refer to our self-serving desires and pleasures. Remember what James said in chapter 1:14? *"Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."* The warning is that *"me first"* desires will destroy our friendship with God and cause divisions, wars, and fights (vv.1-2). Therefore, we are told to put off *"me first"* thinking. How do we do this? He'll explain more as we go along but verse 7 says, *"Submit to God"*. God is God and His will must always be first. Second, *"Draw near to God"*. Deal with those desires that lead to sin by going to God for help and cleansing. *"Me first"* living is not the key to success. *"God first"* living

is! Hawthorne writes, "I once was full of self, and proud, just like a Pharisee. Until one day, quite by surprise, I caught a glimpse of me.

- What do families and friends commonly fight about? What are some conflicts you see in churches?
- What are the two main behaviors that James criticizes in Verses 4:2-3?
- Memory Verse James 4:1
- Prayer - Father, make Your passions and desires my passions and desires, that I might glorify You.

Wednesday, April 11, "God is not our magic genie." Read James 4:1-4

James 4:2b, 3 says, "*You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*" Some people view God as a magic genie who should answer their every whim and wish. Think about the well-meaning football fan who says, "*Our team's behind. Pray!*" Or the co-worker who left 30 minutes late for work and asked his colleagues to pray that he would get there on time. People who are preoccupied with such self-centered requests usually have a very shallow view of God and His redemptive purpose in the world. They see Him as One who exists to provide for their selfish wants and passions. They desire for Him to alleviate all their problems, and make their lives as pleasurable as possible. They may get that kind of picture of God from secular notions but not from the Bible. Any attempt to manipulate a sovereign God into serving our own selfish purposes belittles Him. And James relates selfish praying to "*friendship with the world,*" which he said is "*enmity with God*" (James 4:3-4). For the next few days, let's analyze our prayers. If they are usually for our own convenience, comfort, or pleasure, it's time to change our praying. Prayer isn't a time to give orders but to report for duty.

- James says that "*anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*" What did Jesus say about God and the world? (Read Matthew 6:24, John 15:18-19)
- Can we love both God and the world? What happens if we try to love both? (Read 1 John 2:15-16, also Matthew 6:24)
- Memory Verse James 4:1
- Prayer - Father, help me to love what You love, want what You want, and love You with all of my heart.

Thursday, April 12, "How to waste a prayer." Read James 4:1-4

A little boy had the habit of sucking his thumb and was told by his parents he must stop. One evening in his bedtime prayer he was heard praying, "*O God, help me to stop sucking my thumb.*" After a pause, he continued, "*Never mind, God, because I really don't want to stop sucking my thumb.*" This boy was more honest than most of us. If we want our prayers to be answered, we must be willing to let God have His way. The pattern for our prayers should be that of our precious Lord, who said, "*Not My will, but Yours, be done.*" In the NIV Bible James 4:3 reads, "*When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*" To pray for something when we know it is not God's will is to waste our breath. To ask God for things that He has forbidden is foolish. To ask God to bless us today, when we plan to do things we know are sin is to ask amiss. These prayers will never be

answered because you ask for your own selfish pleasures. It's vain to ask God to bless our business when we indulge in shady practices or continue in worldly habits. Oh that He would give us brokenness to approach Him with a pure heart and a true desire to glorify Him with every prayer we pray.

- Why doesn't God give some people what they ask for? (Compare James 4:3, Isaiah 55:8-9, 2 Peter 3:8, Philippians 4:6-7, John 15:7)
- Is it always wrong to pray for our own desires? How can we know whether our desires line up with God's desires?
- Memory Verse James 4:1
- Prayer - Father, help me to approach you with pure motives. Reveal to me my true heart condition.

Friday, April 13, "Be careful who your friends are." Read James 4:1-4

James 4:4 says, *"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."* In the original language, the term "friend" speaks of a strong emotional attachment, to love, to have an affection for, or even to kiss. The term "world" isn't necessarily speaking of the Earth; rather, it is often speaking of a system, a mentality, or a way of thinking. This system, this mentality, is controlled by *"the god of this world,"* also known as Satan. The Christian who looks away from Christ and His church to seek pleasure and satisfaction from this world has put other gods in His place. Jeremiah the Old Testament prophet spoke similar words to God's wayward people: *"For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water"* (Jeremiah 2:13). A cistern is a large well or pool carved in a rock. A broken cistern has sprung a leak and can't hold water. God is saying, *"If you go out to the world and drink from that well, it is not going to satisfy you."* We are surrounded by this mentality, this world system that is so contrary to what Jesus teaches. The only way to counteract this world's message is to saturate ourselves with the Living Water of God.

- Does it surprise you that God considers a Christian who claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ yet lives for worldly things and pleasures as a spiritual adulterer? What do you think "world" means?
- Read Matthew 6:24. How is this similar to James 4:4?
- Memory Verse James 4:1
- Prayer - Thank You Jesus for conquering sin and death and the grave!

Saturday, April 7, Read James 4:4-10

Review memory verse.

Prayer: Father, make us ready to hear your Word. Reveal your truth to our hearts. Give us grace to listen and obey. Bind the enemy of our souls and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Give us joy as we meet with your people for doctrine, prayer, and worship.