

WELCOME

Alright, if you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to James chapter 4. James 4. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to James 4. If you open one of the hard-backed black bibles under your seat, James 4 will be on page **1012**.

INTRODUCTION

We've said it this whole sermon series, but James is basically addressing one question in this letter:

How do you know if you have genuine faith?

If you really believe in Jesus Christ, what does that look like practically?

So, remember where we just came from.

- Last week James compared and contrasted
- two types of wisdom.
 - Human wisdom
 - and Godly wisdom.

And I hope you remember that human wisdom was animated by three things. What were they?

- Yeah, the world,
- the flesh,
- and the devil.

So, all human wisdom is animated by these three enemies of our souls,

- and they are like a headwind.
- It's the oppositional force...
- working against you...
- as you run the race...
- of following Christ.

And all three of those enemies are really about YOU.

- YOU diving into the world...
- YOU caving to your flesh...
- YOU believing the lies of the devil.

Here's some of the stuff I said last week about this human wisdom:

- This wisdom wants YOU to follow YOUR heart.
- To speak YOUR truth.
- Be true to YOURSELF.
- Right? YOU do YOU.

So, **self is the new God!**

But listen to me: **you make a terrible God!**

And the Bible supports this, ok?

SLIDE JEREMIAH 17:9

[9] "The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?"

Now, you might think that's talking about

- your roommate's heart,
- or your husband's heart,
- or your sister's heart.

But that pertains to your heart, too!

- You are deceitful.
- You are sick.

And hear me, **that means if YOU are your God, then you have a sick God.**

Seriously, how many of you have gotten that advice given to you?

"Just follow your heart."

- Alright, they probably meant well...
- BUT it's the worst advice you can ever get!

When I was a youth pastor I'd hear some well-meaning parents tell their teenagers, *"Just follow your heart."*

- Oh please, don't tell your teenager to follow their heart.
- Just think about your heart as a teenager.
- Do you really want your teen to do that?

Here's what Jesus says about our heart.

SLIDE MATTHEW 15:19

[19] For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

You don't want to follow that. Yikes!

TRANSITION

Well today, James is going to take a bit of a deeper dive into YOU.

And that's what I'm calling this sermon: **SLIDE YOU**

- And he's going to show us some things about YOU
- that YOU might not want to hear
- but they are the only way to save YOU
- from YOU.

So, let's dig into this text. James 4, starting with verses 1-6.

JAMES 4:1

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

EXPLAIN: PASSIONS

James, again, begins this section with a rhetorical question for his readers.

- *"All this conflict and fighting among you...*
- *where is it coming from?"*

It's not from

- your roommate...
- or your siblings...
- or your spouse...

It's not from

- your crummy upbringing...
- or your job...
- or your circumstances...

It's not even from

- your wounds
- or what's been done to you
- or the trials you've faced...

NO! Where's all this conflict from?

- *"It's from YOU!"*
- *It's from your passions."*

Now, the word *passions*,

- is sometimes translated *pleasures*,
- or even *appetites*.

It's actually the Greek word where we get the English term, *hedonism*.

So, he says you have these passions that are at war...

- you see how this is linked to our discussion
- of the two wisdoms at war last week?

But where is this war being waged? Within YOU!

POINT 1

And it's my first point this morning about you:

SLIDE YOU ARE YOUR PROBLEM

What causes the quarrels? What causes the fights?

- It's not really what's going on around you.
- It's not your husband or wife.
- It's not your crazy kids.
- It's not your jerk of a boss...
- or that neighbor who's driving you nuts.

No! It's something going on inside of YOU.

To quote G.K. Chesterton, when asked, "*What's wrong with the world?*" He answered, "*I am.*"

And James is going to show us that

- when you seek to fulfil
- your own passions and pleasures and appetites...
- it leads to anxiety inside you
- and conflict around you.

Look at verses 2-3:

JAMES 4:2-3

[2] 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.

[3] You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

EXPLAIN: DESIRE & COVET

So, he brings up two terms. First, he says *you desire and do not have*. Sometimes this is translated, "*you lust and do not have.*"

- The term implies a strong and unhealthy craving
- to secure something that is not yours.
 - *"I've gotta have this.*
 - *I'm not gonna be content until I have this.*
 - *I need to secure this.*
 - *This will make me happy."*

The second term is **you covet and cannot obtain**.

- Covet can also be translated *envy*.
- *“You envy and cannot obtain.”*

Coveting is having negative feelings toward what someone else has.

- *“Why do they get that?”*
- *They don’t deserve that.*
- *How come they have that marriage?*
- *How come their kids seem to be doing ok?*
- *How come their job pays them that much?*
- *They don’t work harder than me!”*

So, YOU being your problem shows up in sinful desires and covetousness.

ILLUSTRATION: COMPARISON

Now, here’s one way you know if you’ve been veering into sinful DESIRES and COVETOUSNESS.

How much do you compare yourself to others?

We have more than anyone else has ever had in the history of the world, and yet we want more than anybody else has ever wanted.

- We look at people around us and we want their life.
- We want their job.
- We want their spouse.
- We want their physique.
 - We want to take their car,
 - from their house,
 - and go on their vacation.

And one of the big ways this comparison happens today in our culture is social media.

- Instagram,
- Twitter,
- Tic-Toc,
- Facebook.

And if some of you are on a social-media high horse, and you're like,

- "I don't do those silly Facebook things."

Well, you are probably prone...

- to the original social media way
- of comparing yourself to others...
 - which is just looking out the window
 - and seeing other people,
 - and comparing yourself to them.

But what we do when we compare ourselves to other people...

- is that we compare what we KNOW about ourselves...
- to what we DON'T KNOW about them.

SOCIAL MEDIA

So, if you are a social media kind of person...

- which I'm not anti that.
- Like, follow me on that stuff.
- I look awesome on Instagram, alright?

But the reality is, when you're looking at that stuff...

- you're comparing your b-roll
- up against their highlight roll.

It's true! Follow me on Instagram and I promise you, I look great!

- We just got a puppy, so all our pics are puppy pics.
- And she's adorable!

But you know what didn't make the Gram?

- The puppy barking in her kennel for 3 hours straight!
- The puppy crying at 2am.
- The puppy pooping on the floor.

At 2 in the morning I'm not like,

- "What, she's braking again?"
 - Quick, grab the phone!"
- "Oh, she's peeing on the carpet?!?"
 - We've got to capture this."

But what you're doing when you compare yourself to anyone else

- is you're comparing yourself
- to a fake family. Right?

Now, my Instagram family is based on a true story. Right?

- There are three Martins
- and two dogs
- who all live together
- and go on adventures.

But what you see is edited. It's too good.

And it's so problematic for us to compare ourselves to those fake realities.

EXPLAIN: MURDER, FIGHT, & QUARREL

And what do those desires and coveting lead to? James says

- you murder,
- and you fight and quarrel.

He's saying,

- *"YOU hate,*
- *YOU fight,*
- *YOU quarrel...*
- *YOU do whatever it takes to get what YOU want!"*

But what's the common denominator here? YOU!

YOU ARE YOUR PROBLEM!

EXPLAIN: ASK

And then James says,

- *"You don't even ask for these things.*
- *AND when you do ask,*
- *you don't receive*
- *cause you're asking wrongly!"*

All of this is because you want to spend it on your passions.

- There's that word again.
- Hedonism.
- Pleasures.
- Appetites.

TRANSITION

It's all about YOU.

- God is manipulated as a kind of vending machine
- precisely for the purpose of self-gratification.

YOU ARE YOUR PROBLEM

So, James says, verse 4:

JAMES 4:4

[4] You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

EXPLAIN: FRIENDSHIP

So, James calls those in his churches who are behaving so selfishly with an intentionally insulting term: *adulteresses*.

- This is the language that the Old Testament prophets used
- when talking about Israel being unfaithful to God.

Why does he call these people adulterous?

- Because they're cheating on him!
- The text says they are pursuing friendship with the world!

Now, friendship to us doesn't mean quite the same as it did to them.

We live in the day where friendship for us means this: casual acquaintance.

- This takes us back to social media again.
- The Internet has allowed us to feel connected to people
- in a way that was defined as illegal stalking 10 years ago.

- “Oh, look what they had for lunch.
- Who are they with?
- Oh, look at that guy.
- Who’s he dating?
- Oh, that girl.
- Oh! Let’s look at her life.
- Oh, she graduated from that school.
- What? Oh, I guess that’s her brother.
- Let’s check him out.”

I mean, it carries this, “I know them” kind of feel.

BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THEM!

- You’re not friends.
- No, you’re casual acquaintances at best...
- And they actually might be freaked out
 - if they knew how much you have learned about them,
 - not by conversation or contact,
 - but just stalking them on the Internet.

But you see, friendship in antiquity was usually taken far more seriously than in our day.

- Friendship was a lifelong pact between people
- with shared values and loyalties.
- It was vastly more intimate than it is today.

And that's why he calls them adulterers.

- If you're intimate with the world...
- that's enmity to God.
 - Enmity means hostility or hatred.
- You cannot be yoked to the world and to God.
- If you are a friend of the world...
- you are an enemy of God.

James says you can't have it both ways.

TRANSITION

This is again pointing to the fact that YOU are the problem. Not others.

Verse 5:

JAMES 4:5-6a

[5] Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?

EXPLAIN

Now, this is God's side of you pursuing friendship with the world...

- of being an adulterer...

James says that God is *jealous*.

- Now, he's not jealous OF...ok?
 - That's different.
- We're not talking that God is jealous OF us...
- no...he is jealous FOR us.

ILLUSTRATION: JEALOUS FOR

I'll illustrate: before I met my wife...

- I had been in other relationships with other gals...
- and she had with other guys before she met me.

But at our wedding we made vows, declaring that for the rest of our lives we would "*forsake all others.*"

Now, imagine what would happen if I kept a box of mementos of all the women I dated before I met my wife.

- Then whenever I felt sad
- or wanted to celebrate
- or deal with my struggles,
- I pulled them out
- and dredged up memories
- of my previous relationships.

My marriage would not go well. Why? **Because all lovers are jealous.**

There is a healthy kind of jealousy that is birthed in love.

- I am jealous for my wife.
 - Because I love my wife.
- I am jealous for my daughter.
 - Because I love my daughter.

And if anyone or anything tries...

- to turn them from my love for them...
- or to harm them...
- You would see an aggressive side of me...
- I would fight...

APPLICATION

James is saying:

- You have to pick.
- Friendship with the world
- or friendship with God.
- Because God is a jealous God.
- He is jealous for you!
 - Because he loves you.
 - Because he created you.
 - Because he called you.
 - And because he saved you.

He is a jealous God,

- and he will not share you with anyone or anything
- that would pull you away from him.

And then, verse 6:

JAMES 4:6

[6] But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

APPLICATION: GRACE

Oh, how I love this verse! Because if you're anything like me, as you read this whole friendship with the world thing, you realize...

- Dang! I'm an adulterer.
- I've been unfaithful to God.

Anyone else?

- No?
- Just me?
- Maybe I should just take off this face mic right now...
- and hand it off to one of y'all!

Listen, I don't know how you dragged your sorry self in here today.

- Maybe the idea of God yearning jealously to redeem you...
- you have no category for that.
- You think he is done with you,
- that you've sinned in ways he couldn't possibly accept.

But what this text is saying it that

- regardless of how loud or vile the sin is in your life,
- **HE GIVES MORE GRACE.**

It's not that grace wins by a hair,

- grace wins by a landslide.

Grace blows sin out of the water.

- It hits the showers,
- gets dressed,
- talks to the media,
- and has a steak dinner,
- before sin even crosses the finish line. OK?

That's the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- **He gives more grace.**

How does God respond to our adultery?

- By turning up the volume of grace so loudly
- that the volume of rebellion is no longer heard
- but eradicated all together.

That's the good news of grace.

What should our response to this be? Look at verse 7.

JAMES 4:7-10

[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

POINT 2

In response to YOU BEING YOUR PROBLEM.

The solution is **SLIDE** YOU MUST SUBMIT

ILLUSTRATION: SUBMIT

So, I've been in pastoral ministry since 2003, so, more than 18 years at this thing.

And I have seen that there are people in churches all over the place,

- who want to follow Jesus...ok?
 - They'd say they are born-again Christians.
- But they have made no steps at all in submitting to him.
 - To obedience.
 - To doing what he commands.

So, if you've been at this thing for 5, 10, 20, 30 years...

- and you feel that Jesus can be your Savior...
- with no submission to him...
- no tangible evidence that you've changed...

Then you are NOT a friend of God.

- You are in friendship with the world.
- You have not submitted to him.

Now, I am NOT saying that we are perfect in our obedience to Jesus.

- I mean, goodness, of all people,
 - I have personally put on display
 - that we all have a lot of work to do
 - as we more fully submit to him.
- God has used times in my life,
- in public and forceful ways,
- to get me on my knees before him.

But my question is:

- Do you have ANY desire to submit?
- If you look at your Christian life,
- can you point to any real, tangible submission?

EXPLAIN: HOW TO SUBMIT

And how do we submit? Well, James gives us five ways to submit...and we could really do a sermon on each one, but for the sake of time. How do you submit?

RESIST THE DEVIL

First, verse 7, you **resist the devil**.

- It's wartime language again in this text.
- In the Greek that connotes aggression.
 - Resist.
 - Stand firm.
 - Fight.
 - You don't run.
 - You turn, and you fight.
 - You don't try to make it to safe ground.
 - You pull your sword and engage.

And do you remember what that sword was from last week? Yes!

God's word! You resist the Devil with the word of God.

DRAW NEAR

Second, verse 8: you **draw near to God**. You pursue him.

- If we resist the devil and he flees from us...
- this is who we run to!
- We run to Jesus.
- We draw near to him.

And we do this primarily through the spiritual disciplines.

- Now, we preached through a bunch of that last year,
- but I'll point you to the two we talked about last week.
- We draw near to God through the word of God.
 - We read,
 - and meditate,
 - and memorize God's word
 - in order to get to know God.
- And then, we do this in the church.
 - Church community helps us draw near to God.

The word and the church.

CLEANSE & PURIFY

Third, **cleanse your hands** and **purify your hearts**. And this is what I said last week about putting our sin to death.

- I'm sorry if I scarred any of you...
- with my murder Puma illustration...
 - but I stand by it.
- We cleanse our hands.
- We purify our hearts.
- We confess and repent of our sins.

MOURN

Fourth, you mourn. Now, this one might seem strange to us, but I think this is James calling his listeners to make a public display of their repentance.

- Mourning in the Bible,
- wasn't just a personal sorrow for a loss.

When a loved one died, ancient Jewish funerals were noisy affairs.

- Today, they are kind of quiet.
- Hushed silence.

But back then, they yelled and mourned.

- They expressed their anguish and emotion.
- People ripped their clothes.
- They even hired others to mourn with them.

But James is saying:

- once you realize the grievous nature of your sin,
- you will be upset and show it.
- When you realize just how far away you've gotten from God,
- you will cry out publicly at the horror of it.

HUMILITY

And finally, verse 10: **humble yourselves**. Which is the conclusion of this thought. And this is the culmination of you submitting. Humility.

- Prideful people don't submit.
- Humble people do.

ILLUSTRATION: WOMAN IN ADULTERY

Now, Matt Chandler brings up the story of the woman caught in adultery, and I think it's very fitting!

- John 8 tells us a woman was caught in adultery.
- She was dragged naked into a crowd
- and flung at the feet of Jesus.
- And the men who caught her say this to Jesus:

SLIDE JOHN 8:4-5

[4] "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. [5] Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"

- So, this gal is guilty!
- She's been caught!

Though, I'd like to know what these men were doing to catch this woman in the act!

- But now they drag her to Jesus.
- And with snot and tears and shame all over her...
- They ask, "*What do you say, Jesus?*"

And Jesus says,

SLIDE JOHN 8:7b

"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

- And from oldest to youngest,
- they dropped their stones and left.
 - Then Jesus picked up a rock and pelted her.
 - No! That's not what happened.
 - I can't believe you would think that!

SLIDE JOHN 8:10-11

[10] Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" [11] She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

Now, here's the beautiful thing in this story. The man who drag her in are correct.

- By law,
- the Law of Moses,
- the Old Testament law...
- God's law...

By law...she should die!

- Her guilt is never in question.
- It is visible for all the world to see.

She is an adulterer...she is the problem!

But in the most shameful, despicable moment of her life.

- Jesus looks her in the face and says,
- *"You are not condemned."*

That's it right there. HE GIVES MORE GRACE.

- It's in our heart-brokenness over our sin
- that this jealous God
- gives more grace to the humble.

This type of grace brings about a humility which God exalts.

- It's the humble God knows.
- It's the humble God draws near to.
- It's the humble the Lord loves.

TRANSITION

Now verses 11-12 are kinda a throwback to the idea of us working on our speech, and not discriminating against brothers. It's a practical outworking of this stuff.

But I want to end with the good news for us all in this section.

CONCLUSION

- If you realize that YOU ARE YOUR PROBLEM.
- And if you realize that YOU MUST SUBMIT.
 - Again, that's confession and repentance.

Then Jesus' words to the woman caught in adultery are for you, too.

- "Has no one condemned you?"
- Neither do I condemn you;
- go, and from now on sin no more."

And that's the good news. **SLIDE** YOU **ARE NOT CONDEMNED**

Romans 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

If YOU are in Christ, then...YOU ARE NOT CONDEMNED.

- YOU ARE YOUR PROBLEM.
- YOU MUST SUBMIT.

But if you do...YOU ARE NOT CONDEMNED. He gives more grace.

So, where do you find yourself today?

- Do you feel like the woman caught?
 - Maybe you've got some sort of hidden sin...
 - And today it's like it's been found out...
 - No, nobody else may know about it...
 - But He does...
 - And you do!

And you need to be free of that thing!

- Just think of the freedom that woman felt after she leaves?
- We all know the weight of the heavy burden of hidden sin!

You can be free of that today!

- So, what do you need to confess today?
- What do you need to repent of today?
- Where do you need to submit today?
 - Humble yourself.
 - Submit.
 - Do it today!
 - He's jealous for you.
 - He loves you.

- Come to him.
- He gives more grace.

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

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- Keller, Tim. *A Counter-Culture of Grace*.
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- Wilkin, Jen. *Genuine Faith and Godly Wisdom*.