



Mirror Moments—Accepting the challenge to look into the truth of God’s Word for the purpose of being devotedly holy, fully faithful and vibrantly fruitful for God’s glory.

This fourth chapter of James takes us into some of the most challenging examinations of our lives. As you sit quietly in the presence of the Holy Spirit; as you listen for God to speak through the words of James 4; remind yourself that the context

of these strong statements is this: God loves his bride the church—that’s you and me. He’s longs to be intimately connected with us. So the strong language in James comes to us through the voice of a lover who refuses to be in second place. You’re loved that much! God is fighting for all of you and your heart!

Some “reflection” suggestions:

- A. What emotions and thoughts come to mind when you consider the “jealous” love of God for you?
- B. Reread James 4 slowly. Jot down words or phrases that the Spirit is prompting you to pay attention to.
- C. What is God saying to you about . . .
Your desires (v. 1)
Your motives (v. 3)
- D. Possibly, you’ve sensed that you’re investing too much in this world. What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about your ties to the world? Be specific. How has the world been like a creeping jungle invading your soul’s temple?
- E. Worldliness often comes in specific shapes and forms. As you read through the following, are any of these an issue for you? Addictive substances such as tobacco, alcohol, street drugs, the abuse of prescription drugs; certain forms of entertainment such as unwholesome movies, TV, media, computer games, music; pornography; gambling; unwholesome human relationships. Are any of these crowding out love for God in your life? What do you want to tell God?
- F. Are there other areas such as busyness and the pursuit of status, reputation or wealth that have crept into your life? If so, talk to God about them. Simply name these other “loves” or preoccupations, confess them before God and seek his forgiveness. Ask Him to drive them out of your soul’s temple.



A verse-by-verse study in James on becoming devotedly holy, fully faithful and vibrantly fruitful in Christ

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**Notes for Today’s Message:
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In today’s passage, chapter 4, “Doctor James” becomes even more bold and his bedside manner even less comforting. In this most challenging of all chapters, James goes to the core of our heart’s condition as he confronts some of our deepest and most personal spiritual failings.

James calls himself a “slave” of Jesus Christ in his introduction. For him and other Bible writers they belong completely to God. Because they do, all of life is holy.

Over and over, James challenges the prevailing world view that tells Christians they can live compartmentalized lives—one compartment for the world (secular) and one for God (religious). Let’s continue our journey into practical, everyday living no matter if we’re dressing in jeans or suits.

1. Key points thus far:

- James is to the New Testament what _____ is to the Old.
- James calls us to rid ourselves of the world’s soul-polluting contamination and proactively serve others in need.
- Faith and works are complimentary sides to the same door. Both are essential.
- The words that come out of our mouths is a major indicator of the spiritual condition of our _____.

2. James 4:1-2—what causes conflicts

Key word—v. 1: “desires”— hedone It has at it’s core the meaning of “pleasure.” It’s the root word from which we get “hedonistic.”

Key word—v. 3: you ask with wrong motives (NIV/NASB), you ask wrongly (NRSV)

These inner drives, unchecked, lead one to break the sixth (thou shalt not kill) and tenth (thou shalt not covet) commandments.

Note the progression of sin: This chain reaction starts in the inner person with strong desires that lead to outward conflicts. The result is the absence of prayer. But even when a person does ask from God, it's denied because of the wrong motives. God cannot answer certain prayers because the blessings would be used for selfish pleasure.

3. James 4:4-6--Warning: love of the world is hatred toward God

Biblical context for "adulterous people"

- Isaiah 54:5: "For your [Israelites'] Maker is your _____"
- Jeremiah 3:20: "But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel!"
- Hosea refers to Israel as an unfaithful wife
- 2 Corinthians 11:1, 2 and Ephesians 5:24-28 speak of the church as Christ's bride

Key Word—v. 4: "world"—kosmos It's used in various ways in the NT. However when spoken of in a negative sense it generally has to do with the idea of _____. "...The New Testament often uses the word kosmos in the sense of the world apart from God." William Barclay, The Daily Bible Study Series, James

Key Word—v. 5: "Envies" is also translated as "jealously desires" (NASB). In the OT God spoke of Himself as being a jealous God when it came to his relationship to his people, the Israelites. (ie., Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 32:16, 21; Zechariah 8:2)

Sidebar: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 declares, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. NIV
Preoccupation with the world is a huge space waster in temple of our lives. Jesus may need to drive out some "money changers."

What idols and other gods were in the lives of the Israelites, the love of the world can become to us as Christians. Through James, God is making clear that He wants no competition in our lives. He will not be trifled with!

The strong language in this passage comes from an even stronger heart of love. God gave up his Son for us. This Son, even before his human conception, had already entered into a prearranged marriage with his bride, the church. But He had to first rescue his bride from sin and Satan. The cost? Jesus' death on calvary. No wonder God is jealous of any worldliness that would seep into our lives and sweep us away.

In light of such love, it's appropriate to ask, **in what ways are you being unfaithful to your divine lover?** How has the love of the world crept into your life? What about in the areas of: marriage, family, friendships, work? Within your spheres of leadership and influence are their areas of worldliness that you need to ask God for courage and wisdom to confront?

4. James 4:7-10--How to remedy a spiritual affair

Key Word: Submit—hupotasso It comes from the military and meant to be subordinate to a person of a higher rank.

Nine powerful action words follow. These are positive actions to counter our love affair with the world.

5. James 4:11-12--How worldliness shows up in interpersonal relationships

Matthew 18:15-17 – If you have a problem with someone, deal directly with that person. Speaking ill of someone behind his back drains the power of God from our lives and short circuits the effectiveness and witness of our churches and related institutions.

6. James 4:13-17--subtle forms of worldliness

Psalm 90:12 reads, "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Someone has quipped, "the problem with life is it's so daily."

Because life is so daily, because we navigate in time and space as humans, it's natural for us to assume that more days will naturally follow--that we're in control. James challenges us to face reality. We're here on planet earth for a brief time and we're not in control. Tomorrow is not promised to us!

Wrap Up: James closes this fourth chapter with a positive injunction to do good. Sin is not merely the presence of worldliness in a Christian's life; sin is also present when we fail to do good. That really raises the bar on what it means to live a holy life for the glory of our groom, King Jesus.