

>>>>>> James – Lesson 10 <<<<<<<

- 1) Last time, we talked about Godly wisdom and how it affects our lives, James moves on once again to our selfish side.
 - a) We read and talked about these first four verses last week.
 - b) However, we needed to have them fresh in our minds before we get to verse 5.

James 4:1–4 (NASB 2020)

Things to Avoid

¹ What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not your pleasures that wage war in your body's parts? ² You lust and do not have, *so* you commit murder. And you are envious 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 with the wrong motives, so that you may spend *what you request* on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- 2) Now for verse 5...
- 3) One commentator calls verse 5 a “minefield of unsolved problems”.

James 4:5 (NASB 2020)

⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, “He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us”?

- 4) That is the NASB 2020 translation. Yours may say something different.
- 5) We begin with the fact that though James clearly states that “Scripture says”, followed by a quote.
 - a) However, to date, scholars have not been able to identify any passage that says this.
 - b) Many of them believe this is not a direct quote, but a summation of principles displayed in scripture.
 - c) Other possibilities are that James quoted some other sacred book, or some unknown Greek translation of the Old Testament which we no longer have.
- 6) Beyond this particular problem, the quote itself is problematic.
 - a) The Greek itself becomes an issue; it is very difficult to translate.
 - b) As you translate this you, get tangled up in verbs and objects and differences in manuscripts.
 - c) All that leads into some questions; the word “spirit” – is it referring to the Holy Spirit or our spirit?
 - d) Additionally, we run into an issue of who is jealous; is it God, our spirit, or jealously itself modifying something else (our spirit)?
- 7) I’m going to read 3 versions of verse 5.

8) We will begin with the NASB2020 again.

James 4:5 (NASB 2020)

⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, “He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us”?

- a) There are a couple of things to point out in this translation.
 - i) First, to clarify, the word spirit in this here **is** capitalized indicating the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) In the NASB, capital S on spirit always indicates Holy Spirit if it is not the first letter of a sentence; obviously, in this translation it is not.
 - ii) Second, personally, I personally do not understand the concept of God jealously desiring the Holy Spirit.
 - iii) If, however, we did not capitalize the spirit then this would make more sense – God jealously desiring our spirits which He made to dwell in us at creation.
 - iv) I really have trouble trying to deal with this particular translation.

9) Next, the NET (New English Translation) ...

James 4:5 (NET 2nd ed.)

⁵ Or do you think the scripture means nothing when it says, “The spirit that God caused to live within us has an envious yearning”?

- a) In this case, spirit is **not** capitalized so this would be our spirit.
- b) Also, in this case, it is our spirit that has the “envious yearning.”
- c) Now, if we think about the previous 2 verses again, we can see an argument for this being correct contextually.

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend *what you request* on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- d) The indication in this translation is not that God is jealous but that our spirit is jealous and envious.
- e) This is why we ultimately become friends with the world just as James describes.

10) Now, one other translation, the NIV ...

James 4:5 (NIV)

⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us.

- a) First, if you are looking at the NIV, you see that it does NOT have quotes around the troublesome quote.
 - i) It treats it as an indirect or summation of what is being said.
- b) Second, we see that the word spirit is **not** capitalized so this would be our spirit.
 - i) The NIV as a rule capitalizes spirit when referring to the Holy Spirit or Spirit of God.

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- ii) However, the NIV does not normally capitalize the h in he or him pronouns when they refer to God.
 - c) So, in this case, we could say that God (he) longs for the spirit (our spirit) which he (God) caused to dwell in us.
 - d) If we look at the previous 2 verses with these facts in mind, contextually it makes sense.
- ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend *what you request* on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- e) However, we do have to assume or infer that it is God who wants us back; In some cases, He may abandon us to our sin but He will always take us back, right?
 - i) I believe that statement to be true so, we can easily see how God would “jealously long for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us (our spirit not the Holy Spirit).”
 - ii) He does not want us to be friends with the world.
- 11) Now, when we look at the following verses (which we will do in a moment) we will see that this idea is born out in what James tells us we must do and what God expects.

Now, before we read the next 4 verses do you have questions?

- 12) All 3 (and even other) translations are arguably syntactically, semantically, and grammatically correct.
- a) Again, a difficult verse to translate.
- 13) Ok, if we read verse 6 and following, we see perhaps how translations showing God being envious of our spirits would fit contextually with these verses as well.

James 4:6–10 (NASB 2020)

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. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners; and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be miserable, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

- 14) Now – I think you can see how God longing for or being jealous for our spirit really fits contextually with what verse 5 is saying.
- 15) What we just went through is really Textual Criticism at the translation level.
- a) It is very rare that we run across such difficult passages in the New Testament.
 - b) When we do, it is really good for us to dig in a bit and make sure that, even if we do not have a total understanding of the verse or verses, at least we know where things might be coming from.
- 16) Ok, let’s spend a couple of minutes finishing up these verses.

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17) The New KJV puts a title on this passage (verses 7 through 10) which really is appropriate;

“Humility Cures Worldliness.”¹²

- a) To say this a little differently, we are supposed to be God’s, and we are no longer part of the world and all its pleasures.
- b) Lust (implied lust for things of the world) leads, as James tells us in 4:3, to murder, fights and quarrels.
- c) Wanting things of the world leads to prayers with wrong motives.
- d) He calls these folks “adulteresses” saying that friendship with the world is hostility toward God.

18) All of this describes a spirit within us that is becoming friends with the world.

19) In this state we become enemies of God.

20) All these things are from our self – our spirit if you will – obviously not the Holy Spirit.

21) But, in all this I think there is something wonderful to be seen.

22) James goes on to say in verses 7-10 that if we find ourselves to be like this to any degree at all here is what we should do.

- a) Submit to God
- b) Resist the devil
- c) Come close to God
- d) Cleanse our hands
- e) Purify our hearts (double minded)
- f) Be miserable, mourn, weep
- g) Let our laughter be turned into mourning, and our joy into gloom. (be miserable??)
- h) Humble yourselves...

23) Now, what James has described here is pretty demanding picture.

Here’s the question – is this “a” definition of repentance? OR

Could this be “the only” real definition of repentance?

BEFORE YOU ANSWER, HERE ARE THE OTHER TWO QUESTIONS!!!

If yes – do we always do it and why not if not?

If no – what parts could we leave out? OR what parts are left out?

1) Ok, looking at the next passage 4:11-12

James 4:11–12 (NASB 2020)

¹¹ Do not speak against one another, brothers *and sisters*. The one who speaks against a brother *or sister*, or judges his brother *or sister*, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*. ¹²

¹² [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Jas 4:7.

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There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?

- 1) We return to what appears to be James' favorite theme – control of the tongue.
 - a) A little different aspect but control, nonetheless.
- 2) Of course, that is rightly so for as he pointed out back in chapter 1 verse 26 ...

James 1:26 (NASB 2020)

²⁶ If anyone thinks himself to be religious, yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this person's religion is worthless.

- 3) Going back to verse 11, the literal translation here is “Do not speak *evil* against one another.”
 - a) From BDAG, additional definitions are, to speak ill of, speak degradingly of, to defame, or to slander.¹³
- 4) Here we are finding fault or condemning our brother or sister.
- 5) In verse 12 he is drawing a parallel between speaking evil against someone and judging someone.
- 6) As we made note in the beginning, there are lots of connections to the sermon on the mount throughout James and here is one of the more obvious ones.

Matthew 7:1–2 (NASB 2020)

Judging Others

¹ “Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. ² For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

What are ways you can think of that we speak against a person?

- a) Bruce Barton makes several valid points regarding the word “speak against” or “speak evil against”.
 - i) It can mean “to slander” which means of course to make false statements about a person in order to damage a person's reputation.
 - ii) We may speak the truth about a person and still be unkind, which of course is equally bad.
 - iii) We can also spread gossip that others have no business knowing.
 - iv) Questioning someone's authority or nullifying their good work by backbiting is another way in which we can speak against a person.
 - v) He also points out the obvious fact that these kinds of actions hurt the harmony among believers.
- 7) From the context, this appears to be an ongoing problem that James is addressing here.¹⁴

¹³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 519.

¹⁴ Bruce B. Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, [*James*](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 107–108.

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- 8) The takeaway for us here is without doubt – DON'T DO THIS!
- 9) Other than the reasons James has already talked about, he further gives the reason that we are judging – not only the person but also both the Law (Torah) and the law of freedom.
- a) The ten commandments clearly states: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
 - b) Secondly, Christ made it clear as he quotes Leviticus 19:18 “**Love your neighbor as yourself**” and further, again from the sermon on the mount:

Matthew 7:12 (NASB 2020)

¹² “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

- 10) To sum this up, James makes it clear that we are not in a position to be doing these things.
- a) There is only one law giver and judge – we are NOT Him.
 - b) We have no right to criticize our neighbors.
 - c) When we do, as Barton points out we usurp God’s authority and we are full of pride.

11) Paul weighs in on this same topic in Romans:

Romans 14:4 (NASB 2020)

⁴ Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Now, here is a hard question for us – is there any wiggle room left for us after reading and understanding this? In other words, can we criticize others under any circumstance?

- a) When I thought about it, I really could not find any and that made this teaching even harder.
 - b) I would like to at least be able to yell at a piece of bad driving but – can I?
 - c) I can think of a lot of other things that I really say (even if only in my mind) that I truly should not say.
 - i) It is not that I might be wrong – in many cases – I can be right as right can be BUT it is not forgiving, and it is not as caring, both of which I should be.
 - ii) These are serious things that James is bringing to bear here and have a great impact on our FAITH DEMONSTRATED!
- 12) One further comment here.
- a) This cannot be a reason for not standing up to wrongdoing.
 - b) James is not talking about dealing with sin or other issues that affect a person’s salvation or the church.
 - c) We have obligations and a design for handling these things scripturally.
 - d) This is about being critical – getting into our opinions about things.