

TITLE: James (Lesson 20)

TEXT: James 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION: In today's lesson James is using military imagery to describe a civil war that is going on on two fronts. We learned in our last lesson that peace is the result of heavenly wisdom. (See James 3:13-18) It is that wisdom that James is applying to the battles that Christians are engaged in.

I. (vs. 1-3) Christians fighting in the Church!

A. What is the source of all this infighting?

NOTE: "War (*polemos*) pictures the chronic state or campaign, while fightings (*machē*) presents the separate conflicts or battles in the war." *Word Pictures in the N.T.*

1. It comes from an *internal* war within the Christian.

NOTE: Our *lusts* (desires for pleasure) are on an active campaign in our bodily members.

2. We lust or covet for something we do not have.
3. We are even willing to *kill* to get it!

NOTE: Such a frustrated desire leads to the attitude: "If I can't have what I want, no one else will have it either!" The Bible links verbal assassination to murder. See Matt. 5:21-22 and I John 3:15. "There is a spirit of rivalry and jealousy in the church." *J.V. McGee*

B. The flesh can never be satisfied for long!

1. Until we desire God first, our desires will never be fulfilled.
2. Striving to fulfill our lust results in conflict with those around us.

C. What happened to prayer?

1. Why pray for something God doesn't want for us? (*ask not*)
2. Whose will do we want done, mine or God's? (*ask amiss*)

II. (vs. 4) Whose side are you on?

A. James is describing Christians who have made wrong alliances.

1. They have chosen the *flesh* over the *spiritual*.
2. They have chosen the *world* over their relationship with God.

NOTE: The *world* here refers to the world's value system, not location.

B. Dear Christian choose which side you are on!

NOTE: Joshua 24 It is not a matter of God withholding good from us but rather evil that leads to destruction.

III. (vs. 5-6) The Scriptures have spoken!

A. The Bible does *not* speak in vain.

1. Believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit jealously desires us to the point of envy.

NOTE: Eph. 4:30; 5:18; I Thess. 5:19; 2 Cor. 11:2

B. God gives to us "more grace".

1. Abounding grace to overcome sin in our lives.
2. He gives it to those who humble themselves before Him.

NOTE: Who seek wisdom (James 1:5) and desire to put God first. Prov. 3:34

C. God opposes in battle array the arrogant and haughty.