

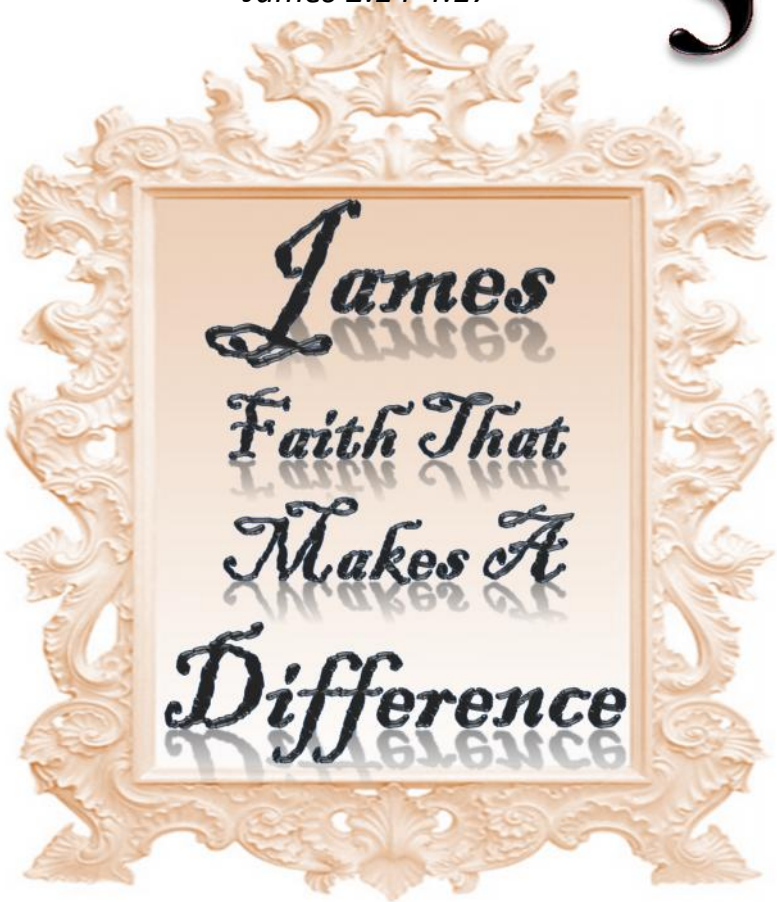
*Making Life Count Series*

*A Bible Study Book on the Epistle of James*

*April & June 2013*

*James 2:14-4:17*

**3**



*Growing to a Deeper Level of Spiritual Maturity,  
Demonstrating and a Higher Quality of Christian Character.*

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***Christ E Free Church Pulpit Series***

***June-Oct 2013***

[ Revised 2/9/14 ]

*Jesus Christ*  
*Our Highest Calling,*  
*Our Greatest Purpose,*  
*Our Soul's Source and Joy*  
*And Our All-Consuming Passion.*

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In his writing to the early scattered believers, James is calling the present Church to be growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, while evidencing a higher quality of Christ-like character.

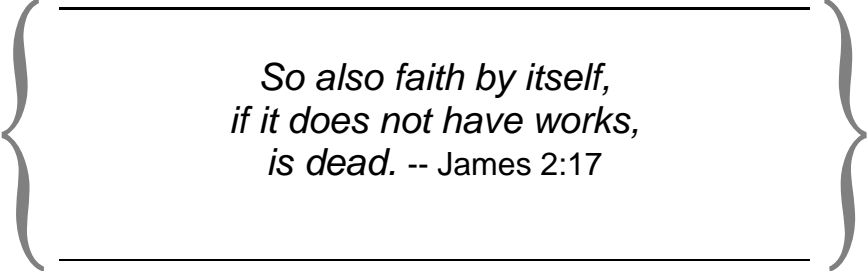
The heart break is that James is addressing a church with such sin evidencing traits. The great hope is that there is abundant grace for all who repent and submit to God!

# ***“Are You Smarter Than A Demon?”***

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TEXT: James 2:14-26

September 15, 2013



*So also faith by itself,  
if it does not have works,  
is dead. -- James 2:17*

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Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people  
into thinking they can't lose.

—Bill Gates

## **INTRODUCTION**

Today, our focus is on the most important topic known to man and sometimes, the most volatile. That is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our salvation.

What is the gospel and what must take place in order for the promise of the gospel to be realized in the life of a person? Churches have split over this issue. Wars have been waged over this very topic and some have been burned at the stake. Revivals, reformation and great awakenings have also occurred as a result of this topic.

## **STUDY IT** - *What do I learn as a Disciple of Christ?*

In James 1:13, James corrects our understanding on the character of God. In chapter 1:17, he corrects our understanding on the nature of God. And in 2:19, he corrects our understanding on the salvation of God.

Suppose you attend a wedding ceremony. The music has begun, the participants have taken their places, with the groom standing at the altar, flanked by the beautifully arrayed wedding party. The wedding march begins and plays completely through, but the bride never arrives. The music stops. The groom shouts, "*I'm married*" and runs out into the limousine and drives away. The question here is this: Did a wedding actually occur? Is the groom actually married? Something important is missing.

## **THE INSEPARABLE UNION**

The Main Point is this: Faith and Works are meant to be inseparable. Both faith and works have different roles, but each are intended to complete one another. Scripture is clear, that "*we are saved by Grace through faith*" alone, in Jesus Christ, not of works. (Eph.1:8-9) That message is illegal in over 51 countries and unfortunately, in some of the pulpits in America.

### **Faith Without Works**

Question: What good is faith without works? (v14)

**Jas 2:14-18** ESV What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, (16) and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? (17) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (18) But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Actually, 3 Questions are presented.

- 1) What Good is faith without works? (James 2: 14)
- 2) Can that faith save him? (2:14)
- 3) If someone needs help, and we are able to help, but refrain from giving help, what good is that? (2: 16) or “what good is that” *kind of faith?*

James is addressing the misunderstanding that a person can believe one way and live another, and think that’s OK or acceptable with God. But faith without works is unacceptable!

I was recently talking with a brother in Christ, who believed that once you are saved, you can lose your salvation. I believe that Scripture teaches that once you are truly saved, there is no losing your salvation. But this brother brought up an important point, that some feel that once you are saved, then you cannot lose your salvation, therefore you don’t have any worries, and can live however you want to live. We agreed, that being saved and living any way you want to, is certainly not taught in Scripture and is an inappropriate for any Christian.

James is writing to correct that kind of thinking. In his writings, he calls into question the validity of that kind of faith and even the salvation of those who hold that kind of belief.

**Jas 1:26** ESV If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

**Jas 2:10** - Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

**Jas 2:17** So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead ( or lifeless)

James questions faith that is not married to works. Works do not save us. It is God’s grace which saves us, and our faith in Jesus is accounted as righteousness and forgiveness to us. However, if there are no works, or no appropriate Christian lifestyle to accompany that faith, then is that true saving faith? James questions that.



So, if there is not both bride and groom, at the ceremony, did anyone really get married? A young person stated just a couple weeks ago, that they would not want to be a Muslim because of all the rules they have to obey. My response was, we have probably just as many rules that we are required to live by. Many Christians, however, consider those rules optional.

I'm saved so I'm good. I trusted in the death of Christ, so I am not under the law of God. - And for many, they have come to view the commandments of God upon His Church as optional. I can pick and choose what to believe and what to obey.

The Commandments of God are not optional. They are not suggestions. 2 Cor. 5:10 reminds us that as Christians, we will stand before God one day to give account of every deed and every work that we have done or failed to do. Our faith should be inseparably linked with works. They are intended to go together!

### **Faith *With* Works**

Faith and works are intended to be like a marriage. They are intended to complete one another.

**Jas 2:18** ESV But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Now think about the question about the “wedding” with no bride. Imagine on the wedding day, Faith is all decked out in his tux and tails. The music is playing and the whole congregation is waiting, but Works never shows up. Faith looks great. He’s sharp and handsome and looks good, but no wedding can take place because Works doesn’t show up, and the result is Faith remains incomplete. Faith needs Works to be complete.

Or Works makes her way down the aisle, and is all dolled up and everyone is standing as she processes down to the front of the

church, and the crowd waits, and waits, and waits for Faith, but alas, Faith never shows up. Is that a wedding? No. Both have to be

present to be a marriage. A wedding has to take place in order for both Works and Faith to be complete and this is the analogy James gives to us in chapter 2.

Faith and Works is a marriage made in heaven. They were not intended to be alone. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, James argues that faith without works, leaves no evidence for that faith. Works without faith has no means of salvation taking place.

Faith saves. Works display faith. Together they are married. Faith and works are two individuals with different purposes, but intended to be united in an inseparable union, otherwise it is a **useless, worthless, lifeless and questionable faith.**

## **BELIEF IN THE TRINITY**

Belief in the Triune God is not enough. Belief in the Trinity is understood in the spirit realm and yet insufficient for salvation. But just because someone has a good theology, doesn't mean they are all genuinely saved.

### **God is One**

**James 2:17-20** ESV So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (18) But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (19) You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder! (20) Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

This seems best stated, "God is one", rather than "there is one God". Even the demons believe in the one true and living God in 3 persons, in what we refer to as the Trinity or Tri-Unity. This is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, 3 in One.

"God is one", would remind any Jew of the Hebraic statement of faith in Deuteronomy 6:4.

**Deu 6:4-6** ESV "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, *the LORD is one*. (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

This is at the very core and content of what both Jews and Christians believe – the Lord our God is one – or “the Lord is a Triune God”. The Demons believe this and tremble or shudder. Now they can’t be saved. But they fully believe, through personal experience that God Almighty is One God, in 3 distinct persons. The demons believe, but they are *not* redeemable.

### **Are You smarter than a Demon?**

**James 2:19** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder! ? (20) Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

If you were to ask a demon if he believed in the Trinity, how do you think he would respond? They would be like, “Oh, yeah, I believe. It was God the Father who kicked us, along with our leader, out of heaven.” Oh yeah, it was God the Son, who shed His blood and defeated us at Calvary.” Oh yeah, it’s God the Holy Spirit who indwells every lousy Christian, empowering them to live a powerful and victorious life in Christ.”. “Oh yeah, we believe”.

They believe, and yet they cannot be redeemed. Their future is already decided.

You can say that you “believe” and yet it make no difference in your life. You can say you trust in Jesus and never be saved from your sins. You can say you are religious and even a Christian and never be truly saved, converted or transformed with His new life.

We must not be satisfied with being as smart as a demon, but smarter than a demon. You can know the information, without placing your faith in Jesus as Savior. In fact if all you do is say you “believe”, you are only aligning yourself with the unbelieving, unsaved, unconverted, hopelessly lost and eternally condemned demons of hell.

But a genuine faith in Jesus, will trust Him fully as Savior. It will trust His promises and act on them. That faith will remain steadfast, even when tragedy strikes and our questions to God go seemingly unanswered.

## THE DEVASTATING ERROR

The error of works salvation is devastating. Works accompanying faith is crucial, but it can lead to the error of *works* salvation.

Trusting in works is the most devastating and perhaps the most common mistake a person can make regarding salvation. Many denominations have made this error.

### Was Abraham was justified by his works?

**James 2:20-24** (20) Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? (21) **Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?** (22) You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; (23) and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"<sup>[Gen.15:6]</sup>--and he was called a friend of God. (24) You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

This refers to the inseparable union of faith and works. And we believe that a person is justified by faith and not by works. And James tells us that Abraham was justified by *works*. How can both be true? (1) Abraham was justified by faith before God. (2) Abraham was justified by works before men.

In Genesis 15, God reaffirms His covenant with Abraham.

**Gen 15:1-6** ESV After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." (2) But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" (3) And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." (4) And behold, the word of the LORD came to

him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." (5) And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (6) **And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**

In Gen.15, God declared Abraham righteous by his faith, approximately 20 or so years before he offered Isaac on the altar, in ch.22.. So why does James say that Abraham was justified by his *works*?

Remember that James is making a point between two hypothetical people who were arguing about who could demonstrate one another's faith. "*Show me your faith **without** your works, and I will show you my faith **by** my works*" (v18). In other words, you cannot show me your faith without works. That is the point. Works are intended to be the evidence of true saving faith.

Then when Abraham does offer Isaac on the altar, 20 years after being declared righteous by God, because of his faith, then Scripture tells us this.

**Gen 22:11-12** ESV But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." (12) He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

In Genesis 15, God gave Abraham the promise of many children. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. But for 20 years God's promise and Abraham's faith in God's promise went un-tested. So when the time of testing came, Abraham offered Isaac on the altar and the angel of the Lord stopped him, he said -- "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." – or as

James might put it, ..."*now your faith has been completed by your works*".

Did God need to see Abraham's faith displayed through works? No. But Abraham needed to complete his faith by works, in order to experience the promises of God, fulfilled in his obedience.

Until then, his faith was not complete with his works, so the union (or the wedding ceremony) had not occurred. So when his faith was tested and his works were complete, that faith-based work, demonstrated to anyone who would be paying attention that his faith was indeed a true, living and saving faith. And Abraham experienced God's deliverance of his son, as a testimony of His promises.

### **Justification by Faith Alone**

God justifies or declares us righteous by faith that only He can see. People justify or declare us righteous by the works they can see, which demonstrates the faith they cannot see.

And in understanding this properly, we realize that James' theology and the Apostle Paul's theology<sup>[Rom.4:1-5]</sup> don't conflict or contradict one another as some claim. But they fit perfectly together, in an inseparable union of faith and works, with one having completed the other. Scripture helps us interpret Scripture.

As in all the commands of God they boil down to this: Do we know and love the Lord and are we willing to demonstrate our love to Him?

James says....

**Jas 1:12** ESV Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Jesus Himself says...

**Joh 14:15** ESV "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

### **What does it matter to us?**

Scripture does not contradict Scripture. People, however, can be mistaken! People are often mistaken in how they understand faith and works and salvation.

It is important to remember that Scripture helps us interpret and understand other passages of Scripture. Perhaps you still don't quite understand this point or why it is important. The issue is this: How do we receive forgiveness for the sins that we have committed and how do we receive the righteousness for that which we could never earn or deserve? Through faith in Christ as God's only Son and our only Savior, we are forgiven and receive the gift of His righteousness, which is credited to us. It is a gift from God (Eph.2:8-9; Rom.6:23).

In closing, let us read from Paul's writings to the Christians in Rome.

**Rom. 4:1-5** ESV What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? (2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. (3) For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." (4) Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. (5) And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

**Rom. 5:1-2** ESV Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

### **Obey It - Off the Page and into my life**

What level is your faith? Does your faith evidence the fact that you believe God's promises? Do your good works and acts of obedience display a true, saving faith?

Is your faith useful or useless? Is it worthy or worthless? Is your faith fully alive or lifeless?

Also, are you depending on good works to help get into heaven? Do you think it doesn't really matter what you do or how you live

– at least you have trusted Christ and you think you are going to heaven – that’s all that matters.

**1) Believe in the inerrancy** of Holy Scripture and its authority in every area of our lives. Without this, you will always give yourself the freedom to live as you please.

**2) Trust Fully in Jesus** Christ as God’s only Son and your only Savior. He is your only Hope and the only way to heaven. (John 14:6)

**3) Live for Christ**, obeying His commands, trusting in His promises and evidencing your faith as you tell others about Him. That is what its all about as a believing Christian, as we are growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, while demonstrating a higher quality of Christ-like character.

----- Thinking Things Through -----

- 1 ) What does it mean to say “I am smarter than a demon?” What do demons believe about God? (2:10)
- 2) What is the inseparable relationship between faith and works? (2:18)
- 3) According to James, how is a person justified by both faith and works? (2:21)

*So also faith by itself,  
if it does not have works, is dead.  
-- James 2:17*



-----Praying It Through-----

Holy Father, thank you that you have done for me, what I could never have done for myself. Thank you for the death-blood sacrifice of Christ, which pays for my sins. I trust in Christ alone as God's only Son and My only Savior.

In Jesus' Name,

--Amen!



# “Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires”

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TEXT: James 3:1-12

Sept. 22, 2013

**Theme:** Our words, Christian hypocrisy, and our words...

*How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!  
And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The  
tongue is set among our members, staining the whole  
body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on  
fire by hell. James 3:5b-6*

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*We spend the first twelve months of our children's lives  
teaching them to walk and talk and the next twelve [years]  
telling them to sit down and shut up.  
--Phyllis Diller*

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## INTRODUCTION

[1 minute video] 1932 Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Inside each Christian, live 2 people; the Christian and the old sinful nature. Those 2 people are at war with one another. James will explain that in greater depth in ch.4

*If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his  
tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is  
worthless. --James 1:26 ESV*

## **STUDY IT** - *What do I learn as a Disciple of Christ?*

### **INSTRUCTION**

James addresses elements of the Christian life of those who are inside the family of God. In the Bible, the mouth and our lips are often referenced – but in James, the tongue is used to refer to the words we say and the impact they have on others. Expressed through our words, is revealed the inner content of a person's feelings, desires and beliefs.

*The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.*  
- C. S. Lewis

### **A Weighty Responsibility**

Some who are not teachers, should be. Consider instruction as the weighty responsibility of a teacher. Being a teacher of God's Truth is a high honor, that is, as it refers to teaching God's Word.

### ***Responsibility***

**Heb 5:12-13** **ESV** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, (13) for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.

Some have sat through countless Sunday School classes, sermons, and small group studies their whole Christian life, yet have never really begun passing that information on to others.

Being a teacher requires, ambition, study, some training and discipline. Yet these things should not discourage a teacher from becoming a teacher. Some who are not teachers, should be. But James offers the flip side.

### ***Caution***

Being a teacher carries a great responsibility. Therefore, some

who *are* teachers, perhaps ought *not* be teachers.

**Jas 3:1-2** ESV Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. (2) For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

A Bible teacher will be judged more strictly, as it pertains to misrepresenting the Truth of God's Holy Word. He offers words of caution. A Teacher has the ability to lead or to lead astray.

James warns us that not everyone is cut out to be a teacher. It may not be your calling or at least at this point. A person may not mature in the faith to become a teacher, Therefore he/she should not try to be one.

#### **DIRECTION**

A teacher has the privilege of equipping the church for ministry and advancing the faith of young believers.

**James 3:3-4** (3) If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. (4) Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

A small instrument may have great capabilities. The tongue is small, but has great capabilities. Our words are to give Biblical guidance to others. Teachers are those who are gifted by God for the task of understanding and passing on God's Truth to others.

**Eph 4:10-14** ESV He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) (11) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and ***teachers***, (12) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of

God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (14) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Teachers are gifts from God to the church in order to:

- 1) Train and equip the church for ministry
- 2) Instruct believers to deeper maturity
- 3) Teach Truth and help protect from false doctrine and deceitful teachings.

A teacher is to lead by example

**1Pet. 5:2-3** ESV shepherd [feed] the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; (3) not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Shepherding the sheep would include *FEEDING or teaching* the sheep.

A teacher of God's Truth is in the position of a spiritual leader and is accountable to God for our message and influence.

**Heb 13:17** ESV Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Teachers are those who are gifted by God for the task of understanding and passing on God's Truth to others. This doesn't happen accidentally nor automatically.

**2Ti 2:15** ESV Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Knowing God's Word doesn't happen by accident.

*Another element of Christian life James addresses is by*

## **INFLUENCE AND ITS DESTRUCTION**

Our words have power to instruct, to direct and to influence, and even destroy.

“Words”, by Hawk Nelson  
They've made me feel like a prisoner,  
They've made me feel set free  
They've made me feel like a criminal, Made me feel like a king  
They've lifted my heart, To places I'd never been  
And they've dragged me down, Back to where I began  
Words can build you up, Words can break you down  
Start a fire in your heart or, Put it out

### ***Remember - Only You Can Prevent Forrest Fires.***

Jesus warns us that our words have the Power to Influence and even Destroy.

**Jas 3:5-6** (5) So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell..

Members of the body, individuals and corporately, are like the church.

Wildfire News for Sept. 22, 2013

TUOLUMNE CITY, Calif. — A raging wildfire in Yosemite National Park rained ash on the reservoir that is the chief source of San Francisco's famously pure drinking water, and utility officials Monday scrambled to send more water toward the metropolitan area before it becomes tainted.

Nearly 3,700 firefighters battled the approximately 230-square-mile blaze, the biggest wildfire on record in California's Sierra Nevada. They reported modest progress, saying the fire was 15

percent contained.

Jan-Sept 2013 – 38,208 “large” wildfires, involving 4,006,080 acres

“large wildfire” – 100 acres of more of timber, or 300 acres or more of grass. Number of present active large wildfires – 8, involving 309,478, acres with 1,900 personnel committed.

## Great Influence

*\* Our words are like forest fires and carry great destructive power.*

**Speech in James:** Ref to *speech*: Jas 1:13; 19 Jas 2:3; 12 Jas 2:18; 3:2; 5 3:9; 4:11 Jas 4:13 Jas 4:15 ***Tongue*** Jas 1:26 . Jas 3:5 Jas 3:6 Jas 3:8 4:1-2; 4:9; 10; 11; 5:1; 5:8; 12; 14; 16;

Jas 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to *speak*, slow to anger;

Jas 2:12 So *speak* and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

James 3:5 So also the *tongue* is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

James addresses our speech in some form, in every chapter in the book and at least **25** times throughout the book.

***It only takes a spark to get a forest fire going. Only You Can Prevent Forrest Fires.***

## Great Destruction

Unfortunately, even as Christians, our Words are Able to bring about great destruction As Christians, this should not be so! A small spark can cause great destruction. Catastrophic results can originate in a single, tiny, unnoticeable spark. Every year there are wildfires that are so destructive that they decimate large portions of our forests and homes.

Our words are described in James as...

“a world of unrighteousness” (or evil)

“ that which corrupts the whole body” (fully)

“sets on fire the course of life” ( personal life)

And remember, he is addressing *Christians*!

## INSINCERITY AND ITS DEMONSTRATION

What power do I evidence to those around me? Anyone of us have the power to deceive, like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. We can act one way, then turn around and demonstrate a completely different nature.

**James 3:7-12** (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, (8) but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (9) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? (12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Remember, he is addressing *Christians*.

**Jas 1:7-8** ESV For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a **double-minded** man, unstable in all his ways.

**Jas 4:8** ESV Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you **double-minded**.

**Double Minded** – Living one way one minute, then living another way. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. – video = dual psyches, two souls or split personality. Idea of having Two different lives, like Jekyll and Hyde. Modern secular psychology has a diagnosis for every problem, but they never call it sin. There is a prescription for every physiological malady, but never is repentance from sin a part of that prescription. God’s medicine is different from the world’s.



## Life Taking Power

**James 3:7-8** (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, (8) but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

There is life taking power in our words. Death, poison and destruction of cutting words; slanderous speech, cutting remarks, loveless speaking of Truth - all spoken to Christians.

First a fire, next a deadly poison. The antidote for this poison is repentance and surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

**Psa 141:3** ESV Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

Words can build you up, Words can break you down  
Start a fire in your heart or ,, Put it out  
Let my words be life, Let my words be truth  
I don't wanna say a word, Unless it points the world back to You

Are my words, life giving or life taking? Do my words build up or destroy?

**Pro 18:20-21** ESV From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips. (21) Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

Stomach or the American interpretation is the heart. It is also the word for the womb. It is intended to indicate the innermost part of a person.

Pat Brien tells us that people in Papau New Guinea give their *stomachs* to Jesus and God comes to live in their *stomachs*.

**Phm 1:7** ESV For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the **hearts of the saints have been refreshed** through you.

**Phm 1:7 KJV** For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the **bowels** of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Have I ever told you, “you really refresh my bowels”?  
In the Bible, that was a statement of deep appreciation.

## The Deeper Christian Life

Our words should be a demonstration of the deep Christian life. Words will demonstrate the deeper Christian life or the life of a double-minded, dual-lived Jekyll and Hyde.

**James 3:9-12** (9) With [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, **these things ought not to be so.** (11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? (12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

## **OBEY IT** – As a Disciple of Jesus Christ, What will I do about it?

What do your words reveal about who you are? Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires. We are talking about gossip, slander and wrong teachings. Do my words reflect that I am a double minded Christian, living a double life, like Dr Jekyll one minute and Mr Hyde the next?

Sometimes as Christians, we open our mouths and do more damage than good. We can praise God on Sunday morning (or think we are) and within a matter of minutes, be out the door and for all means and purposes cursing others with our bitter, poisonous, unrighteous, or self-righteous and uncontrolled words. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

- 1) acknowledge your sin of words
- 2) Repent of that sin, asking God to cleanse you of its unrighteousness
- 3) Pray Ps. 14:1-3

**TELL IT** – Was a Disciple of Christ, what will I pass on to others?

- 1) Death and life are in the power of our words... (Prov.18:21)
- 2) I might encourage others who believe they are sharing Truth, but are mistaken, to check their message with God's Word.
- 3) Ask others to consider the power and influence of their words, whether it be positive or negative.
- 4) "Thank you for those kind words. You have truly refreshed my bowels"

----- Thinking Things Through -----

- 1) Why was this entitled: "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires"?
- 2) What different effects can our words have on others?
- 3) What kinds of words and what kinds of effects do my own words have on others?

*"How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!  
And the tongue is a fire..." – James 3:5b*

-----Praying It Through-----

Lord, please purify my speech and help me to be one who builds up and encourages, rather than brings about destruction by my words.

In Jesus' Name,  
--Amen!



# ***“Wisdom from Heaven: Evidence of Submission and Change”***

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**TEXT:** James 3:8-18

Sept. 29, 2013

**Theme:** Godless living in the church

**Thread:** Faith that is growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, while evidencing a higher quality of Christian character.

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

--James 3:17-18

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By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.

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--Confucius

## **INTRODUCTION**

Scripture teaches that God wants to change His church. And He wants to purify and sanctify each believing Christian. In this passage, James airs some Christian dirty laundry. In this passage, James points out the fact that the sinful fallen, human nature is reigning as dominant in the life of the believers and is actually

overpowering the new Creation and thwarting the life renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

*Can Sin Defeat God or defeat God's purposes?*

3:2 – “we all stumble in many ways” – esp. in words

3:5 – words are destructive – like a forest fire

v.6) “world of evil or unrighteousness (inappropriate for Christians)

v.7) “restless evil, full of deadly poison” (destructive and painful)

Sounds like the kind of church, if we were church hopping, one might do well to hop right on by and just avoid that one altogether. James writes to a church in need of Holy Spirit change.

**STUDY IT** - *What do I learn as a Disciple of Christ?*

## GAINING CONTROL

James helps us to see the importance of gaining control of our words. If your words are not yet under control, then a crucial change has not occurred in your life<sup>[1:26]</sup>. If that crucial change has not occurred or is not in the process of occurring, then there is a very good chance, that Christ is not Lord of your life. vs.9-12 indicate there is a crucial change, that is missing.

### Impossible for Man

Humans can't control or tame or change the tongue. (v18)  
However, *God can and will*. What is important and can hinder God defeating our sin, is our own unwillingness to submit to His will and work in us.

Gaining control of our words, involves giving God control of our lives. This is submission. That means our spending, our thoughts, our desires, our decisions, our relationships, -- that means our entertainment and even our clothing. (note: “*every evil practice*”, v.16) James asks a few questions which are intended to make the reader think through the issue.

Answer: **NO!**

3:11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? (12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

*No is the intended answer. It is not in it's makeup. When it comes to sin – NO is the right answer.*

So we learn the importance of our words and our need for complete submission to God.

## **A CONGREGATION OF FOOLS**

Saving faith is evidenced by good works (ch2). And Heavenly Wisdom is evidenced by good works – works which match our talk. Our lifestyle must match our beliefs.

### **Wisdom and Foolishness (v13)**

In Scripture, *foolish* is not stupid or ignorant. It has nothing to do with our IQ. *Who is wise? Show it by good conduct and works of humility of wisdom.* This means a willingness to live out God's will and purpose as a Christian, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and under the fullness and control of His Holy Spirit. It also means being willingly submitted to the authority of God's Holy Word, the Bible.

Foolishness hears and knows God's word, yet disregards it. Wisdom hears, knows and obeys or submits to God's word, because it is *God's Word!*

### **Wise and Foolish Builders (Mat.7:24ff)**

A life built on God's word is wisdom. A life built apart from God's word is foolishness.

James is addressing a congregation of fools, because their lives are not built on obedience to the Word of God, nor are they evidencing deeper spiritual growth or higher Christian character. What they do evidence is a lack of inner change and submission to God's word of Truth, even to the degree of rejecting it.



### 3 FLAMING ARROWS

We also learn about 3 flaming arrows from Satan's quiver. Satan plans to attack our relationships through our old nature.

**Eph 6:16** ESV In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

3 flaming arrows from Satan's quiver

1) bitter jealousy      2) strife      3) pride

**James 3:14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth



#### **Arrow #1: Bitter Jealousy (v14)**

Bitter jealousy is self-focused, evidence of Christian immaturity and is one way the devil can cause problems in the Church. ((“bitter”- cp.3:11 water (“deadly poison” - v8))

Angry that others have something you don't and wish you did. Pride is self-promoting, and self-focusing. “I deserve to be noticed” or “I want to be mentioned or in the spotlight.”

The same sin is what causes us to fight to be in front of the line in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but we have never grown out of it – because God has never been given control of my life, and invited to change me. The Christian life is all about change, and quenching the flaming arrow of bitter jealousy. And without true change, we're dealing with a congregation of fools.



#### **Arrow #2: Selfish Ambition / Strife (v14)**

Jealousy is fueled by a Selfish, Childish focus on self. Jealousy is born from selfish ambition, which itself gives birth to strife. When more than 1 person has the “me first” mentality, that is when strife and wars can occur. We are not taught that. We are born with that in our DNA. This kind of war can even break out in the church if allowed to. And remember, James is addressing the Church, which

when filled with strife breeding selfish ambition, is little more than a congregation of fools.



### **Arrow #3: Pride**

(v14)

Self 1<sup>st</sup> is result of the sin of pride. Pride says, “I want what I want!” Pride is Satan’s greatest weakness. Satan’s weakness is displayed in us, when “self” rules our actions and our speech. If not quenched by submission to God’s Holy Word and His Holy Spirit of change, these flaming arrows will continue to burn and consume the Christian life, evidencing a foolish and sinful heart.

**1Th 5:19** ESV Do not quench the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit wants to make Christians, truly Christ like. These 3 flaming arrows can extinguish the intent of the HS, when we remain unrepentant and unsubmitted to God.

So Can Sin Defeat God? It seems it can if WE allow it to.

## **3 GODLESS ENEMIES**

Here, James brings out 3 enemies of Holy Spirit Change. Any sin that goes unaddressed with a spirit of unrepentance is an enemy of Holy Spirit Change. James deals with these more in chapter 4, but he gives us a brief outline here.

**James 3:15** This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

Notice these phrases in James: “*not from above*” (cp.1:17) and compare with “*not down from above*”. (3:15”) Perhaps we could say, sin is “*up from below*” that is the devil and/or hell.

**enemy #1 - earthly or worldly (v15)**

Worldly is the system of thought and life that rejects God, His Word and His plan. It is in this environment of worldliness that sin thrives.



**1Jn 2:15-17** ESV Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

**enemy #2 – unspiritual or *fleshly* (v15**

Fleshly is from the inside of the fallen, broken, sinful, human nature. This is the sinful nature we are born with. This is that which God desires to change in the life of every true Christian.

**enemy #3 - demonic or *devilish* (v15**

The devil is not responsible for all our sin. Much of it we are responsible for ourselves. But certainly our enemy the devil intends to destroy us, and destroy the change which God wants to bring about in our lives. Remember, that the tongue is “set on fire *by hell*” (3:6)

Sin doesn’t extinguish itself. It continues to grow, becoming more and more insidious and destructive, like a forest fire raging out of control

*Finally, we learn about the...*

## **GODLY GIFTS**

**Jas 3:17-18** ESV But the wisdom from above<sup>[1:17]</sup> is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. (18) And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Godly wisdom is evidenced by Godly works. Contrast these with “every evil practice” in v.16.

**James 3:16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

## Godly Wisdom

The Godly gift of wisdom is ultimately, appropriate Christian conduct. This was emphasized earlier in James 3:13.

3:13) Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

This is our lifestyle. So this is what James gives us in v17. Pure living. Peacable relationships. Gentleness in treatment of others. Reasonable in their dealings and discussions. Merciful in our helping. Not showing favoritism for personal gain. Not false, but true, sincere, honest, upfront behavior, evidencing deep spiritual growth and Christian character.

This character and conduct is Godly wisdom on display and evidence of an inner filling and Holy Spirit change.

## Peaceful Righteousness

3:18) And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Remember James' concern for the righteousness of God in the lives of the believers? (1:20)

**Jas 1:20** ESV for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

James informs us that not anger, not selfish ambition, not strife, not forceful, dominant, personalities in the church family, but peace is what effects righteousness being spread, and displayed among God's people.

## **OBEY IT** - *Off the Page and Into My Life*

1) Practice peaceful communications with others, without arguing or without having to put your two cents worth in.

2) I will begin to value the virtue of submission to God. It is not weak to submit. It is wise to surrender to the will of God in my conduct.

3) I will take steps to extinguish the flaming arrows of Satan against me and to keep from extinguishing the work of the Holy Spirit in me.

4) I will say YES, to God, submitting to His Holy Word and His Holy Spirit changing my mind, attitude, and countenance.

**TELL IT** - *As a true Disciple of Christ what will I pass on to others?*

1) I will tell other what God is doing and changing in my life.

2) I will encourage others I meet of the blessings I have experienced, as I have been attempting to submit to the Lordship of Jesus in my life.

3) This is an important part of discipleship and what God can use to show others what it means to be a follower of Christ and challenge them to follow Christ as well.

----- Thinking Things Through -----

1) In order to gain control of my words, what must first take place?

2) Why are the 3 flaming arrows considered to be flaming?  
Which one is my biggest problem?

3) What are the 3 enemies in James 3:15? How are they related?

4) What steps will I take to put out the sinful fires in my life?

*“How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!  
And the tongue is a fire...” – James 3:5b*

----- Praying It Through -----

Dear God, I have so many stumbling blocks in my life. Please take control of my life, that I might begin to control my words.

I'm so sick of it.

In Jesus' Name,

--Amen!



# **“3 Enemies of The New Creature”**

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Or “*Who is Lord? Who is Lord?*”

**TEXT:** James 4:1-6

Oct.6, 2013

**Theme:** the sinful nature and Wars Between Believers

Desires 1:14 / selfish desires – 3:14

**Thread:** Faith that is growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, while evidencing a higher quality of Christian character.

*“What causes quarrels and what causes fights  
among you? Is it not this, that your passions  
are at war within you?”*

-- James 4:1 ESV

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You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up  
for something, sometime in your life.

--Winston Churchill

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**James 1:16** – God does not Change, but God wants to change us.

3 Enemies of the Christian and how to be victorious over them.

James presents us with the package in 3:15, then he begins opening the package here in chapter 4. We briefly introduced this last week. In order to have victory over an enemy, we need to know that enemy and how it operates. Then we can begin to fight that enemy more effectively, with the resources at our disposal.

## **STUDY IT** - *What do I learn as a committed Disciple?*

*Why are these 3 enemies, enemies to begin with? Because of....*

### **THE NEW MAN IN CHRIST**

Every person who trusts in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and salvation of their soul is made new “*in Christ*”.

#### **A New Creature**

God has redeemed us and made us new. Scripture tells us the believer in Christ has become a new creature in Christ.

**2Cor. 5:17** (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

God has made us new in Christ.

#### ***Saved by grace***

When you place your faith in Jesus, you are a sinner saved by grace.

**Eph 2:8-10** ESV For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The Bible refers to us as Saints, yet we still struggle with sin.

#### ***Forgiven Criminal***

When you become a Christian, you become a “has been”. You become a criminal who “has been” forgiven of your crime.

**Eph 1:6-7** KJV To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

#### ***Praise the Lord!***

#### ***Reconciled to God***

Also, once you are saved by grace through faith in Christ, you were an enemy with God, but now you are reconciled to God

**2Co 5:18 KJV** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

*We are new creatures in Christ.*

## A New Life

*Once you become a new creature in Christ, you receive a new life. And as a new creature, we are expected to live differently. All things are made new!*

## A New Creature with a New Life

**Rom 6:1-4 (ESV)** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? (2) By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (3) Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (4) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life

## A New Heart

**Eph 4:22-24 KJV** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (24) And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

## A New Purpose

Once you become a believer in Christ, you become a new creature with a new life, with a new heart, with a new purpose.

God now has a unique and personal purpose for each and every believer. Now we know there is a *reason* to live.

**Eph. 2:10 KJV** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them *\*As New Creatures who live differently, we are given a new purpose for living, and serving and impacting other for Christ.*

Because we are new creatures *in Christ*, we now have **3 Enemies**, and this is today's focus. James introduced these enemies earlier.

**James 3:15** This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly [fleshly], unspiritual [worldly], demonic [devilish].

## **ENEMY #1: THE FLESH - Our Sin Source**

The flesh is our old sinful nature; godless, evil, lust-filled desires or passions; selfish pursuits; unspiritual thinking or reasoning; The flesh is the source of our sinful desires and propensities. This is the sinful nature we are born with. This is our sin "DNA" which God desires to change in the life of every true Christian.

James asks these questions:

**Jas 4:1-3 ESV** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? (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.

These passions or fleshly desires are also referred to in 1:14, as those things that drag us toward temptation and ultimately into sin.

## **Strife and Source**

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

## **Strife and conflict**

When the flesh is ruling, self is placed first and strife thrives. Strife occurs when two or more people are together, both being ruled and

dominated by their self-focused, sinful fleshly desires. It is a potential problem for any of us.

### *Inner desires*

This sinful inner desire is selfishness on the loose. This is unfortunate because this is a reference to Christians who are losing the battle with sin.

### *The Battle within*

This is in reference to the battle against sin. Every Christian must be fighting against the sinful nature being dominant. The self-focused relational battles that sin brings, are not good.

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

Fighting and strife occurs when the New Creature in Christ is losing the battle with the sinful enemy of selfish inner desires and the flesh is ruling as the dominant force.

### *Fleshly Frustration*

Our flesh, not only affects our relationship, but can also affect our prayers.

**Jas 4:1-2 ESV** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?  
**(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.**

### *Always wanting*

The unsatisfied flesh is always wanting yet always lacking what it really desires. This is wanting, but never getting, pursuing but never achieving. This is our unquenched self-focused felt needs and desires which are not being met. The sinful nature is insatiable.

We realize that unfulfilled desires may be wrong desires and God may want to change those desires. The only hope in winning, is choosing to fight.



## Killing and Coveting

When this battle is being lost, there is a fighting to *get*, but never *attaining*. That is because there is no satisfaction or no fulfillment in what one may gain.

They don't get what they want so they kill. "kill = possibly hyperbole or exaggerated speech. This may refer to relational hatred. This may be murder by words or assassination by mistreatment. How deceptively easy it is to confess to being a peace loving, non-violent person, while being guilty of verbal or relational murder.

## *Fights and quarrels*

The focus of these sinful battles is not having what they want. This is the results of fleshly or sinful desires and pursuits without seeking God. You may know God doesn't want you to have what you desire. It may be sinful or a selfish possession. It may be opportunities, relationships, or something else, that is not fitting for the true follower of Jesus Christ to be involved in. It may even be something God may not have for you personally, for whatever reason. Just because a great opportunity is staring you in the face, doesn't mean God placed it there.<sup>[1:13]</sup>

## Unanswered Prayers

Living life dominated with and defeated by our sinful desires can affect our prayer life. God wants to change us and sometimes it is our prayer life that needs transformational change.

<b>Jas 4:3</b> You ask and do <u>not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.</u>
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This is sinful praying. When we pray according to the flesh, we are allowing the sinful fleshly nature to dominate even the deepest and most intimate part of our spiritual life, that is our prayer life. We begin to view God as a resource, not as our Source. He is our greatest purpose, our highest calling, our soul's source and joy and our all consuming passion.

### *Ask and don't receive*

They were asking or praying but not receiving the answer to their prayers that they were hoping for. We should always consider this as a possibility. No one is above or beyond this possibility. This can happen to any of us at some time, regardless of how long we have been a Christian.

### *Inappropriate Intent*

We often do not receive answers to our prayers, because we ask amiss or we pray with wrong motives. We may pray selfishly. We may rationalize our prayers, never realizing that the motives behind our prayers, may be the cause of the outcome of our prayers.

### *Selfish gain*

These Christians were praying selfishly, in order to spend what prayed for on their sinful lusts or selfish pleasures. This is unfortunate that some Christians prayer life is reduced to such self-centered interaction with God. And sadly, this improper motive is never realized by some Christians.

### *Lives full of sin*

What a confusing and defeated Christian life this depicts. How disappointing this kind of attitude must be to God, when He sees and listens to lives full of sin and self-focus, yet praying and seeking blessings from God, all the while wondering why God is not giving the answers we desire?

**Jas 3:14** ESV But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.

**Isa 59:1-2** ESV Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; (2) but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Fight the enemy! Acknowledge the enemy. Don't allow the selfish, sinful nature to dominate your Christian life, and defeat your prayer life.

**Rom 13:14** ESV But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

## ENEMY #2: THE WORLD OR OUR SIN RESOURCE

“Worldly” is the system of thought and life that rejects God, His Word and His plan. It is in this environment of *worldliness* that sin thrives, and self-focus is the “miracle-gro” fertilizer.

The flesh is the inner desires. The World is our outer influences. The flesh is the *source* of our sin nature. The world is our sin *resource*.



If flesh is a customer, The world is a sin supermarket for the flesh and it has aisles and aisles of delectable produce with specials galore. The world caters to the sinful desires of the old man, the sinful nature or the flesh and it is a supermarket of resources for sin.

Adulterous People

These are Christians who have put other loves in their lives before God. In a sense, they have been sleeping around on God.

**Jas 4:4-5** ESV (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.

### *Adulterous*

They were “killing and murdering” in verse 2, now they are not only murderers but also adulterers. They are murderous toward one another and adulterous against God. Like a spouse may have something going behind the spouse’s back, this is Christians allowing everything but God, to be their god or their lover.

### *Worldly*

Friendship with the world is considered as hatred or being an enemy toward God. Remember the world is our supermarket resource for the flesh and it’s lusts. Think about this: Why would a Christian be friendly with the world? Because the sinful flesh is ruling and dominant. The flesh is our sin source and the world is our supermarket sin resource – *they belong together*. Yet is an inappropriate relationship connection for the true believing Christian.

**1Jn 2:15-17** ESV Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

### *Enemies by Default*

Make your choice – it is either, or, you can’t have it both. We can’t love the world and love God. (v4). Even if you never openly choose the world, by failing to choose God, you become enemies with God by default.

The supermarket resource of sin, caters to the flesh and is reasonably priced. Anyone can afford it and all seem to desire what it advertises. But His way is the best way for every Christian.

The Holy Spirit wants to have His way in our lives.

**James 4:4-5** ESV (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"?

God wants to rule in the Christian life. He wants to change and transform each one of us.

### Abundant Grace

James reminds us that though our sin may run deep. Nevertheless, God gives more and more grace. He never runs out.

**James 4:6** But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

He gives more grace for whatever we need and whatever we are facing. While offering grace, we are given the alternative.

"God Opposes the proud but Gives grace to the humble". Or He pours out undeserved favor or blessings on the humble.

**1Pet. 5:5-6** ESV Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

**Mat 23:12** ESV Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

**Psa 138:6** ESV For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.

**Pro 3:34** ESV Toward the scornful he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.

**OBEY IT** - *As A Committed Disciple, What Will I do?*

- 1) God wants to change and transform each of us. Take note of your prayer life. How much of it is telling God what you want, or what He should do? Change it!
- 2) Our flesh will mislead us. Look to Scripture for direction, answers or wisdom in making choices. Ask input from another Christian who is living a Bible based, Christ focused life.
- 3) Don't fuel the fire of the fleshly desires - **Rom 13:14** *ESV But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*
- 4) The world will make problems worse and relationship with God more distant. Look up the word "world" in the NT and see how it is used.
- 5) Acknowledge the battle and start fighting - **Gal 5:16-17** *ESV But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (17) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*
- 6) "Fight in the Light" with other Christians. - **1Jn 1:7-8** *ESV But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (8) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

**TELL IT** - *What will I pass on to others?*

- 1) Share something of this lesson with another person this week.
- 2) Instruct children or Grand-children regarding the battle between our desires and God's desires.

- 3) Go out on a limb. Encourage others to ask God for help, without telling Him what you expect Him to do, or how they think He should do it. Then ask them to tell you how God came through.
- 4) I will encourage at least one other person to acknowledge their inner sin battle and do what it takes to grow more victorious.
- 5) I will pray about and seek out one trusted Christian to pray with me and help me through some of my struggles.

### ----- Thinking Things Through-----

- 1 ) What are our 3 enemies and how are they connected?
- 2) Why do we have enemies in the first place? When did this start?
- 3) In 4:4, why are the Christians referred to as “adulterous”?

“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“  
--James 4:4-5 ESV

### -----Praying It Through-----

Loving Father, I need greater victory against all my enemies. Help me to fight the good fight and keep from feeding my fleshly, sinful desires.

In Jesus' Name,  
--Amen!



## **“Our Adversary the Devil: The Sin Salesman”**

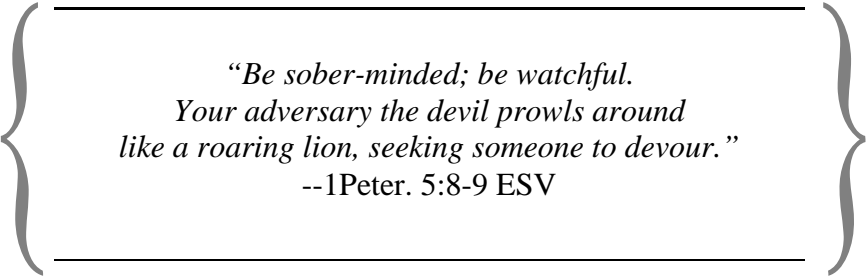
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**TEXT:** James 4:7-12

Oct.13, 2013

**Theme:** Satan and His tactics; Wiles, schemes, cunning, deceitful trickery

**Thread:** Faith that is growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, while evidencing a higher quality of Christian character.



*“Be sober-minded; be watchful.  
Your adversary the devil prowls around  
like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”  
--1Peter. 5:8-9 ESV*

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That most dangerous of opponents: the one who took pains to  
comprehend the position of his adversary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
-Piers Anthony

**Eph 6:10-12 KJV** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

**Review:** 3 Enemies of the New Creature are 1) The Flesh, 2) the World and 3) the Devil.



## INTRODUCTION

Flesh – the source of sin	World – Resource for sin.
Flesh – inner desires	World – Outer influences
Flesh – the customer	World – Supermarket
The Devil is the sin salesman	

*As a true disciple of Jesus Christ, what do I learn?*

## **STUDY IT** - *What do I learn as a true disciple of Christ?*

*Today we learn about the Devil, the sin salesman.*

## OUR ADVERSARY

The devil doesn't show himself for what he really is, that is despicable, detestable, repulsively vile because of his sinfulness. He disguises himself, and his temptations as that which is beautiful, desirable, and "blessed". He preys on our human, sinful desires, and the weakness of our Christian will-power and self-control.

**1Pet. 5:8-9** ESV (8) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Adversary is one who opposes another or is an enemy. The Devil is our adversary, because he is God's adversary. He is the enemy of God. He opposes God. Therefore he is our enemy and he opposes each and every believer, as we purpose to live out God's plan.

I have personally heard people say, "oh the devil doesn't bother me." "He knows better than to mess with me." If you say, "Satan is not bothering me", then there's a good chance you're not doing anything for Christ that would merit him wasting his time on you.

When I hear statements like that I think to myself - "*Ignorance*". I think a person is clueless as to the truth of scripture concerning

the devil. I also think, “*Arrogance*”. How full of pride and self-confidence can a person get? And I think, “*Immaturity*”. This must be someone very young in the faith, or new in the faith, and perhaps ignorant and inexperienced in the faith.

All those perspectives reject the truth of Scripture regarding the fallen angel known as Satan, of whom the Bible describes as our adversary. And he’s not called that for no reason!

### **His Methods**

We know Satan has certain methods of operation or tactics in his dealings with people. They are referred to as his schemes or wiles. (Eph.6:11)

#### *He is a Prowler*

He is always on the move. He attempt to remain unnoticed and undetected. He disguises himself so as not to be easily identified. He is always looking, always watchful, always observant, and is as wise as a serpent. He is shrewd, merciless, self-focused and God-less.

#### *He is a Devourer*

In his prowling, he devours all he is able to – eats up and spits out. He is always on the lookout for an opportunity and always ready to attack and devour. Its what he does.

Scripture also describes him as a murderer and a destroyer (Jn.10:10), the Tempter (Mat.4:3), and a deceiver (Jn.8:44). He is also referred to as the Detainer of our prayers. In Daniel 10, Daniel is praying for help in understanding a vision he had received from God. At the moment he started to pray, help was sent. However, that help was detained by some satanic forces. (Read Daniel 10:12-13).

### **Our Responsibilities**

We must understand our adversary as well as our responsibilities.

### ***Be Sober-minded***

We are *not* to be overly confident or arrogant. We *are* to be clear-thinkers, accurately informed, and wisely discerning in his ways and his tactics and we are to be fully prepared for his attacks.

### ***Be Watchful***

We are to remain on high alert, expectant of his ways and anticipating his onslaught. Remember, we *are* at war!

### ***Be Resistant***

Resist means to solidly stand firm. I was a Tug of War champion in Jr High school. The purpose was to pull your opponent off balance and drag him or her across the center line, into their territory. I learned that there were some tactics that were important. 1) grip, 2) stance or positioning, 3) footing, 4) experience and 5) endurance. I wasn't stronger than everybody else, but I did have the better strategy.

If you are interested in a better understanding of this, Ford and I will be holding a Tug of War exhibition in the foyer following the service today. And I understand that Irene will be taking your bets.

In order to keep from being defeated by our Adversary, we have certain responsibilities we must carry out.

*[In Addition: Eph.4:27; "...neither give place to the devil."]*

## **THE SIN SALESMAN**

The flesh is the sin customer. The World is the sin supermarket. The devil is our sin salesman. We have the image of a salesman, being a sleazy character with slicked back hair, and a gold tooth that sparkles in the sun when he grins at us. Satan is smarter than that and he disguises himself, as well as his product.

### **He Casts Doubt**

In Genesis chapter 3, we understand how Satan casts Doubt on God's word, and character He is filled with God's Word. If you

think the devil doesn't know the word of God, think again. We have every reason to believe he is well versed in scripture. He has had thousands of years to learn it and to practice pe.

**Gen 3:1** ESV Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

“crafty” means cunning, subtle, or well-skilled at a trade. The Devil is well skilled at his trade or tactics or at his sin selling techniques. He is a master at making us think we need what he is selling. That is the goal of every salesman, to make us think we can't live without whatever it is he's selling.

## **He Deceives**

Not only does Satan cast doubt on God's word, but he deceives by perverting it. Some people are more susceptible to being deceived than others.

**Gen 3:4-5** ESV (4) But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil."

\* What a liar Satan is. “You will be like God”. That was and is Satan's desire and he knows he has failed at it. But that doesn't stop him.

**Isa 14:12-15** ESV "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! (13) You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (15) But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Satan knows this did not work for him, nor will it work for those whom he attempts to deceive. This desire to be like God has

brought to Satan the promise of eternal destruction and that is what Satan desires for all those he can trick into following His direction.

He wants to sell us his flawed products, and boy is he good at it. He's good at making us think we want what he's selling – *destruction*.

## He Knows More than We Think

I believe Satan knows our desires. Satan is by no means all-knowing, but he is certainly full of knowledge. And I personally believe he is full of scripture. He is also not all-wise, but he does understand you and he knows you and what your weaknesses are. He knows our weakest points and what it will take to tempt us and begin drawing us away from the authority of God's holy Word. Satan is our sin salesman, and he is successful at what he does. .

So what must we do?

## GROWING

Every Christian should be growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity? Our life is a journey. We don't arrive at our destination by closing our eyes, then opening them and there we are. We arrive by taking a first step, and then another, and then another, until we arrive. Taking the first step is absolutely crucial in going in the right direction. Growing to a deeper level of Spiritual Maturity means taking small *Steps Toward Victory*.

## Step #1: Submission



Submission is the step toward intimacy with God. This is directly God related and the key to aligning oneself to the will and character of God.

James 4:7 ESV Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you

Submission is a step toward victory with God. To submit is to surrender or to place ourselves under the authority of God and His Word. This is an act of the will, and a desire of my heart. This is

probably the biggest and most important step. It is saying “yes” to the will and purpose of God. It is laying aside my will and taking up God’s will. It involves giving it all up and laying it all down. This is submission to God.

## **Step #2: Resistance**



Resistance is the 2nd step toward victory against the devil. This is directly Devil related and is a crucial step in which Satan’s sales pitch is willfully rejected.

This is where the tug of war techniques come in handy. 1) We need to have a good grip on God’s word and the devil’s tactics. 2) We need to position or submit ourselves under the authority of the Word of God, in obedience. 3) We need to be sure we are standing on God’s promises that when we resist the devil, God will give us the victory, through His all-sufficient grace to keep us standing firm. 4) Experience is crucial, in our awareness of his tricks and attacks against us in the past and how we can defeat him in this present battle. 5) We must endure! Keeping up the good fight and not giving in or giving up. Endurance is as James puts it, Steadfastness<sup>[James 1:3-4]</sup>.

The steps of Obedience are to submit to God and resist the Devil. The Promise is that the Devil will flee from you.

- Learn and Obey God’s Word
- Pray for and expect Help from God
- Seek and Accept Help from God’s People, the church
- Resist his tactics by understanding his ways and their consequences
- Reject his sin sales techniques.
- Firmly stand your ground, not allowing his sales pitch to get you to make a deal of any kind with him.

## **Step#3: Repentance**



Repentance is a step toward blessing from God. Repentance is turning away from present sin, and turning to God in faith

and full dependence and victory.

The Step of Obedience is to draw near to God. The promise is that God will in turn, draw near to you. These are God's promises with the prerequisites of His commands that we must follow or obey.

*Repentance is...*

### *A Step of Personal Purity*

Draw near to God by Cleansing one's life and purity one's heart.

**James 4:8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Submitting to God and invite Him to sweep through your life, clean up the heart and purify you from all unrighteousness<sup>[1Jn.1:9]</sup>.

We know that it is God who draws us to Him in the first place (Jn.6:44). We also know that it is by through the conviction of the Holy Spirit that repentance and cleansing must begin. (Jn. 16:8) Cleansing and purity are inseparable, are conviction and repentance. All are crucially important for holy living in Christ.

James reflects the writings of the Psalmist in Psalm 24.

**Psa 24:1-6 KJV** The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. (2) For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. (3) Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? (4) He that hath *clean hands*, and a *pure heart*; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. (5) He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (6) This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O [God of] Jacob. Selah.

*Repentance is...*

### *A Step of Godly Sorrow*

**James 4:9** Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Biblical repentance from sin, has always included genuine grief and sorrow over the sin which has been committed. The idea that a person can be aware of their sin, but feel no remorse over sinning against God, is not presented in Scripture. That is worldly repentance, that is, sorry they got caught, but refusing to change direction or behavior.

True repentance from sin, involves grieving over our sin, much like one who is grieving over the death of a loved one.

**2Cor. 7:9-11** ESV As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly sorrow, so that you suffered no loss through us. (10) **For godly sorrow produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret,** whereas worldly grief produces death. (11) For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you...

Paul is saying, I reminded you of your sin and you are grieved. I am glad you are grieving. Not that I made you sad, but that you are sad because of your sin. This sorrow over sin is exactly that which leads to genuine salvation, and results in life change.

*Repentance is...*

*A Step of True Humility*

James says humble *yourself* and allow God to exalt you (v10)

**Jas 4:6** ESV But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

It is far better to humble ourselves and allow for God to lift us up in His time and in His way, rather than to exalt ourselves, making it necessary for God to humble us as only He can.

Clearly, the former is the more preferable way to go.

We spend too much time exalting ourselves. That is the work of the flesh and the result of the sin salesman at his best. The ideal scenario from James' perspective, is for the Christian to repent



from their sin, humble themselves before God and allow God to do the exalting.

When we do the exalting of ourselves, God will eventually do the humbling. It is what He does, to change who we are.

## **OBEY IT** - *Off the Page and Into My Life as a True Disciple*

### **CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER**

How Can We Begin Evidencing a Higher Quality of Christ-like Character? True repentance will result in a change in behavior. One evidence of Christ-like character is controlling the tongue and...

#### **Putting Slander to death**

**James 4:11-12** (11) Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. (12) There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

#### **You may know you are speaking slander or gossip when:**

- 1) you just can't keep yourself from telling the information
  - 2) you are not sure how sharing this information can benefit the person being spoken about.
  - 3) you speak the information with an attitude or spirit of criticism or sarcasm, rather than grief or concern over the person's welfare.
  - 4) you would not share the information , if you knew the person you were speaking about, were listening.
  - 5) you would not want the same thing told about *you*.
- \* These are evidence of a deeper level of Christ –like character. James refers us back to....

## **The Law of Love**

**James 4:12** (12) There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Earlier he reminds us that this is linked to the genuine love we have for the Lord Himself.

**Jas 2:8** ESV If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

### **You know you may be on the path to loving others when:**

- 1) you are able to bite your tongue from telling some story you heard, because you are genuinely concerned how it would affect the person.
- 2) you are willing to speak up and put a stop to whatever stories someone is sharing about a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, especially when you know they are damaging and possibly untrue.
- 3) You know it is the Holy Spirit of God making you uncomfortable when you are sharing things which are slanderous in nature.
- 4) When after sharing some gossip, you have a lingering sense of guilt, it may be the spirit of God attempting to break through to a hard heart and a calloused conscience.

### **TELL IT - *What will I as a true disciple of Christ, pass on to others?***

- 1) I will tell someone this week how I have been convicted of my own speech towards others behind their back.
- 2) I will remember James 4:11-12 and will read it aloud to a friend.
- 3) I will share the 3 Steps toward victory with someone else this week.

4) I will share with someone else about the devil, being our sin salesman.

### ----- Thinking Things Through-----

- 1) What is our enemy like? What does it imply? Why is he referred to as this?
- 2) What is the sin salesman? What is it he is peddling? From what resource does he get his products?
- 3) What 3 steps can be taken toward victory over the devil?

*“Be sober-minded; be watchful.  
Your adversary the devil prowls around  
like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”  
--1Peter. 5:8-9 ESV*

### -----Praying It Through-----

Lord, I thank you that you have promised victory in Jesus.  
(1Cor.15:57). I also thank you for the precious blood of Jesus  
which cleanses me from all unrighteousness.(1Jn.1:7,9) Please  
help me to be growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, by  
evidencing a higher quality of Christ-like character.

In Jesus' Victorious Name,  
--Amen!



# ***“Making Life Count for Christ: Bringing our Will Into Alignment with His Own”***


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**TEXT:** James 4:13-17

Oct.27, 2013

**Theme:** The Struggle between My Will and God’s Will

**Thread:** Faith that is growing to a deeper level of spiritual maturity, while evidencing a higher quality of Christian character.



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Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"-- yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

—James4:13-14

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"We're not necessarily doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be"

— C.S. Lewis

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Whatever you may have heard or read, It is true – God does have a wonderful plan for your life! However, for the person who is not a devout follower of Jesus Christ, the plan of God for your life may not sound so *wonderful* to you. In fact, it may mean changing.

To the Christian who holds onto their own dreams, and plans and pursuits – the life and plans God has for you may not seem too wonderful. In fact they may seem detestable to you, because it involves, bringing our plans and desires, into alignment with His

own. From our worldly or fleshly perspective, that might seem detestable, but from Heaven's perspective it is indeed, wonderful.

Earlier on in chapter 4, James identified our own selfish plans and desires, with being the very reason for not receiving the answers to our prayers that we had hoped to receive. In our passage today, James addresses the evil sin of failing to seek and follow God's will for our lives. He addresses the sin of presuming to know the will and plans of God, so as to exclude Him any further, in our pursuit of those plans.

## **STUDY IT** – *As a Disciple of Jesus, What do I learn?*

*James helps us learn about....*

### **THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE**

**POINT:** Only God knows our future, yet He does not necessarily reveal our future to us. Because of this, there is for us, an uncertainty to life. But just because there is an uncertainty to our future, does not mean there is no purpose in our present lives.

This points to the fact that the desires of the inner sinful nature are at war with the divine purposes of God in my life. We want to know. We want to be in control. If we don't know, then we can't be in control.

Therefore we have to trust God and ....

**Make every *Minute* count for Christ**

This is a focus on time or the question of *when*.

**James 4:13** (13) *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"--* (14) yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

James addresses the fallacy of thinking that somehow we are in control of our own future. We don't know the *when's* of our lives. We make our plans. We schedule our days... We take steps to

move forward with our plans. But in reality we don't know what will happen.

Time is uncertain. Time is precious. Therefore we should make every minute count for Christ. What about you? Do you realize that even the minutes of your day, matter? Are you making every minute count for Christ?

Minutes become hours. Hours become days. Days become weeks and months, which become years. Before we realize it, life can pass us by and we have failed at making it count for Christ.

Since life is uncertain, we should.....

### **Make Every *Place* count for Christ**

This is the focus on location or the question of *where*.

**“...we will go into such and such a town...”**

The fact is, we don't know for sure where we will end up on any given day. Schedules change. Circumstances surprise us. Priorities are re-evaluated. Our plans often change. When God changes our schedules for us, He has a reason for it. It's His way of adjusting our course and bringing our will into alignment with His own. But oh, how we fight against that. When God uses circumstances to change our schedules, rather than viewing it as God's redirection, we see it as people who messed things up, or problems which added stress to our lives. We get stressed, angry because our schedules are being changed, all the while God is in control and at work.

Few things  
test a man's  
faith like the  
full surrender  
of his own will  
to that of  
God's!

Do you ever think about that? “I had not planned to be in the doctor's office in the middle of the night, but I believe God is in control, therefore I will make this time and this place count for Christ.

Our *when's* are uncertain, our *where's* are uncertain, and also our *what's* are uncertain. Therefore we should.....

### **Make Every *Task* Count for Christ**

This is the focus on tasks or the question of *what*.

Some people spend their lives striving for experiences, meaning, thrill, or accomplishment, or extreme experiences.

I know a pastor who's dream is to climb Mt Everest. He likes those kinds of extreme things. I think of that as a pretty colossal waste of an otherwise, good risk. If you are going to risk your life for something, make it risk for the kingdom of Christ. Smuggle Bibles into a closed country. Be a missionary in a country where no one speaks your language and trust God to lead you, provide for you and do something of eternal value with you. Or what about this, allow God to change your life's dream from doing something that will make others remember you name, to a dream of doing something that will cause others to remember the name and love of Christ for all eternity.

**James 4:13** (13) Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year *there and trade and make a profit*"-- (14) yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

*Trade and Profit* are the ultimate goal and plan of so many people. This is capitalism at its best. When it comes to these topics, we should ask the question, "Is this God's purpose or will for my life?"

The things we thought were important, may become of lesser importance, when overtaken by more urgent matters. Things we had planned to accomplish, may get pushed aside or discarded altogether, when the weightier issues of life press in.

God has a way of using the unexpected and quite often, unpleasant circumstances of life, as the means of directing or re-directing our own paths. God's purposes have a way of intruding into our own.

Joni Eareckson Tada's book, *The Glorious Intruder* is about this topic. Listen to this excerpt from her book.

*From a human perspective, God often appears to be an intruder. He presumes, invades, and infringes upon our lives. At times, God encroaches with gentle, subtle reminders - at others, with sudden,*

*devastating, judgment.*

*God is not tucked away in some far corner of the universe, uncaring, unfeeling, unthinking or uninvolved. You can count on it - He is intimately involved with the tiniest details of your existence. ...His constant presence can bring peace, perspective, and healing into the puzzling and chaotic circumstances of your life.*

As she presents it, God is the Glorious Intruder who is working in us, to bring our lives and our will, into alignment with His own. Jesus was on the way to visit the home of Jairus, a ruler of the Synagogue. His daughter was sick and apparently dying. Jesus was on His way there, but in the crowd that was following him, was a woman who had an issue of blood. He was detained from visiting the dying girl, in order to address the needs of this woman.

While healing the woman, a messenger came that Jairus' daughter had died. As we might see it, Jesus allowed for changes in His schedule. He allowed for intrusions from the lives of others. He considered His time, and place and tasks as from the Father, even the intrusion of the cross. We may not know God's will or understand His ways, but one thing we can be sure about: there is an uncomfortable uncertainty to this life.

*James also helps us learn about....*

## **THE BREVITY OF LIFE**

**POINT:** Opportunities and Relationships are things to consider in making our lives count for Christ. We are reminded that life is brief.

*James asks us...*

### **The All-Important Question**

**James 4:14** yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. **What is your life?** For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

My Grand Father used to tell me that it takes 3 people to see a humming bird. One to say "here it comes", another to say "there it is" and the 3<sup>rd</sup> to say "there it goes." It is one quick little bird!



James asks this all-important question:

## WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

Think about it! .... Now what do you come up with? Life is brief. Time is short. We have heard the adage: “*Only one life, will soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.*”

We know that life is uncertain and it is brief. Sometimes life is like watching a humming bird, you barely have time to think, “there it comes”, then you are thinking, ‘here it is”, and before you know it you are saying, “wow...there it goes.”

One insurance company’s advertisement puts it this way: “*Life comes at you fast*” Life is like that. It is quick and brief – in light of eternity. What am I doing with my life to make it count for Jesus Christ? Making all the money I can? Dating all the attractive people I can? Accumulating all the expensive toys I can? Experiencing all the extreme thrills that I can?

Life  
Comes  
at  
You  
Fast!

You are who you are for a purpose, -- *God’s purpose.*

Your personality, your talents, your life – God has a purpose for it all.

Billy Graham asks, “Can you answer these questions? *Where did you come from? What are you doing here? Where are you going?* I know! *Do you?*”

People live aimlessly, purposelessly, desperately, wastefully and sinfully – apart from God and apart from God’s will for their lives. And yet many are tormented with these questions: What is Your Life? What is your life about? What is your life’s purpose? What is your life’s meaning? What is your life counting for?

**WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?** *For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. (v14)*

Living your life apart from the will of God, is like stumbling home from a party with friends, after you have had one too many drinks.

You try to find your keys to your front door. You fumble with one key and it doesn't work. You give up on that one and begin fumbling with another key, you think surely this one must work, but it doesn't. Finally after the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> key, you get so frustrated, you just rare back and through your key ring as far as you can. Only to realize this wasn't the right door – in fact it wasn't even the right house.

Some people live life like that way, a bit intoxicated or high on the world's influences around us, so that it seems our life is like a key that never fits the keyhole. We fumble through it, becoming more and more frustrated with our life and that its not working out like we had hoped, - never realizing, perhaps until its all too late, that it wasn't the keys that were the problem, - you were trying to get in the wrong door, or even the wrong house.

We have a brief life, but we also have eternal possibilities. We have the opportunities to make every day count for Christ. We have the opportunity to have our will and purposes aligned with God's, so that God may accomplish His eternal purposes through us. I can't imagine a more "extreme" experience than that.

*James reminds us of...*

### **The Brevity of Life**

We appear. We exist. We dissipate. We are history. Once that happens, we are left with the question: What is your Life? What did my life consist of? How did I make my life count for Christ? What did I involve myself in, that made an eternal kingdom impact? Am I fumbling my way through life, wasting the time, the places and the tasks God has prepared for me?

**James 4:15-16** (15) Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (16) As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. (17) So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

"It's My Life!" That is Godless humanism. "My life is my life". "Do Your Own Thing". That is worldly sensuality "If it feels good, do it!"

The American Dream – “Life, liberty and the pursuit of [personal] happiness” – that is can be both heretical, as well as Godless

Pursuing my ways, apart from God’s will. What am I doing with my life? What are you doing with your life? And What answers are you coming up with? God wants us to ***Give Way, To His Will.***

*James helps us learn about the choice of .....*

## **SUBMISSION TO GOD**

Every Christian must come to the point of bringing his/her will into alignment with Gods, in order to make life count for Christ. A life focused on personal pursuits and ideas will be a wasted life – filled with the frustration of never finding the right key to open the right door and forever *blaming it all on God.*

Submission to God is.....

### **Deferring to God’s will in all things**

As disciples of Jesus, we must *Give Way to God’s Will.* We must seek His direction and His purposes, over our own. We must allow Him to bring our life, our desires and our will into alignment with His own.

<p><b>James 4:15-16</b> (15) Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (16) As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.</p>
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There are many in churches today who would even take issue with this statement. Many believe that as Christians, we are able to speak what we desire or claim what we want and if we have the faith, we will receive the things we desire most, even if that doesn’t include God’s will.

It is not boasting to believe God has given you specific direction and placed in your heart the witness of what He may have in your future or what He plans for your life. The boasting here among some believing Christians is that it is sinful to say... “*if the Lord wills.*”. For many, that submission is evidence of lack of faith (at least to them).

**James 4:6-10** ESV (6) ... "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (7) **Submit yourselves therefore to God**... (10) **Humble yourselves** before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

If we don't know God's will or the choice we have to make, then praying or planning with the attitude, "*if the Lord wills*" is fully *Biblical. And what's more, it...*

**#1)** Evidences full acknowledgment, that what I am praying for or desiring may not actually be God's will, but my own will.

*Here is Jesus' example.....*

**Luk 22:40-43** ESV And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (41) And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, (42) saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (43) And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.

**#2)** Evidences full faith in the workings of God that are not according to my own understanding, even as a Believer, but according to God's perfect provision, wisdom and purpose.

*Here is Jesus' instruction....*

**Mat 6:9-10** ESV Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. (10) Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

**#3)** Evidences full submission to the divine will of God in whatever way, at whatever time, and through whatever means is most pleasing to Him.

**Pro 3:5-7** ESV Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (7) Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Submission to God's will is not only deferring to God's will in all things, but *it is...*

### **B. Seeking God's Will In All Situations (Mat.6:33)**

The will of God should be a desire of the heart and intent of your purpose. Seeking involves listening for God's leading.

**Mat 6:33-34** ESV But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (34)  
"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

In every situation and in every decision we need to seek God. Start seeking God's will and direction as early and as soon as possible.

**Ecc 12:1** ESV Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

### **Off the Page and Into My Life**

**OBEY IT** - *As a disciple of Jesus Christ, what will I do about it?*

- 1) READ 1 Cor. 10:31; Col.3:17, 23. We are to do all that we do for the glory of God – at all times, at all places, and in all our tasks.
- 2) Embrace the reality: Embrace the fact that God's ways are not our own ways. One man in our church told me, every morning he prays for God to lead him to people to talk to about Christ. That is making your day count for Christ.
- 3) Face it: Face the fact that, in order for the keys to our life to open the correct door, we must seek and submit to the will of God for my life. Otherwise, will be forever fumbling for the right key, frustrated with our life and disappointed with God.
- 4) Seek God's will and purposes above all other things. Read Mat.6:33.

5) Obey God's will in the smallest areas when you know it. As we are obeying God in the smaller steps of obedience, we will discover that will lead us into the larger areas of His will, without worrying about them.

*\* Don't ask for God's will, if you are not willing to do it once He reveals it to you.*

**TELL IT -** *What will I pass on to others?*

- 1) I will confidently speak of God's work in my life, while cautiously stating my plans for life.
- 2) I will tell others of the Christian's joy of having a God who is actively involved in wisely and lovingly, guiding and helping in every situation.

----- **Thinking Things Through** -----

- 1) Whose will am I following? Is God working in me to bring my will into alignment with His own? How am I dealing with that?
- 2) What people, circumstances or events can you identify as God working to bring His holy will to pass in your life?
- 3) Do I view God's will and working in my life as His truly wonderful plan for my life?

*Instead you ought to say, "*  
*"If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."*

*--James 4:15*

-----Praying It Through-----

Oh Lord, it is so hard to see my own plans dying. What will people think? How will I be viewed by others? Nevertheless, I ask You, in Your own loving and perfectly wise way, to bring my will into alignment with Your own.

In Jesus' Name,  
--Amen!

***Don't close this booklet yet!***



# ***Don't close this booklet yet!***

*without considering this all important question.*

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## **Is Jesus Christ the Savior of *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?**

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --  
*Romans 3:23*

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come from  
God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten  
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but  
have everlasting life. --*John 3:16*

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to die  
in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal  
life through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
-- *Romans 6:23*

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus  
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still  
sinners, Christ died for us. ---*Romans 5:8*

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord  
will be saved." -- *Rom 10:13*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he  
gave the right to become children of God, - *John 1:12*

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are  
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

***Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your  
sins and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.***



## The ABCs

**A** - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

**B** - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

**C** - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*  
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

**Prayer:** Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

**Connect** with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

**Commit** yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

**Heb 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Act 2:41-42** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

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For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:  
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,  
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org)

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**We have a free booklet on:**

**Water Baptism:** *The First Step of Believer's Obedience.*  
*and also*

**A New Creation:** *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*

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*It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be, your greatest purpose, your highest calling, your soul's source and joy, and your all-consuming passion.*

*Other Free Booklets*

1 PETER, pt.1-2 (2Vol): *Suffering in Sojourning*  
1 PETER, pt.3-5 (3Vol): *The Church God Always Wanted*  
100 YEARS OF MISSIONS: *So Where Are We Now?*  
A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*  
ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*  
AMERICA ADRIFT: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*  
CHALLENGES OF FAITH *From Characters in the Bible*  
CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM: *What Will Be Will Be*  
CPR Evangelism: *Helping others Step from Death to Life*  
DIRTY DISCIPLESHIP: *Preparing the Soil of the Heart for the Seed of the Word.*  
ETERNITY: *What Will It Really Be Like?*  
GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: *A Match Made in Heaven*  
GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY: *The Intelligent Divine Design*  
GROWING THROUGH GRIEF: *When Pain Won't End and Hope Seems Lost*  
HOLY WEEK QUESTIONS: *Life After Death & How Dead Will We Really Be?*  
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PRAYERS OF DESPERATION: *Prayer God Answers But No One Wants To Pray*  
Ruth: *Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD.*  
SURVIVING THE STORMS OF THE SOUL: *The Presence of God for the Troubled Soul*  
THE HOLY SPIRIT: *The Friend You Need To Get To Know*  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: *Seeing and Living the Kingdom of Heaven*  
THE WONDER OF IT ALL: *The End Times of Trials, from Mark 13*  
TRAGEDIES OF LIFE: *Things God Allows & Blessings from Heaven's Perspective*  
WATER BAPTISM: *The First Step of Believer's Obedience or Disobedience.*  
WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER: *A Handbook for Pre-Marriage Considerations*  
YOUR LIFE IS LIKE...: *The Challenge to Disciple A Community*

--- All downloadable free resources at: [www.christefca.org](http://www.christefca.org) --





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*May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience  
and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship  
of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit  
in His Church and throughout our mission field*

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