



The General Epistle of James

The Call to Humility

James 4:1-17

I. HUMILITY BEFORE GOD (James 4:1-10)

A. The Problem of Covetousness (James 4:1-3)

1. The outcome of covetousness (James 4:1)
 - a. The presence of problems
 - (1) Wars
 - (2) Fightings
 - (3) Note: The indications of these problems
 - a) The presence of worldly wisdom (James 3:14-16)
 - b) The presence of carnality (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)
 - b. The practice of problems—"among you"
 - (1) Between family
 - (2) Between friends
 - (3) Between fellow believers
 - c. The place of problems
 - (1) The symptoms
 - a) The visible symptoms—"wars and fightings"
 - b) The supposed solution
 - i) Stop warring.
 - ii) Stop fighting.
 - (2) The root
 - a) Your lusts
 - i) The thought of lusts satisfied (Exodus 15:9-10)
 - ii) The fall of lusting (Numbers 11:4-34, esp. 20)
 - iii) The association of lust and counsels (Psalm 81:12)
 - iv) The temptation of lust (Psalm 106:14)
 - v) The choking out of lusts (Mark 4:19)
 - vi) The origin of man's lusts (John 8:44)
 - vii) The uncleanness of lusts (Romans 1:24-27; 2 Peter 2:10)
 - viii) The surrender to lusts (Romans 6:12)
 - ix) The provisions of the flesh (Romans 13:14)
 - x) Fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17, 24)
 - xi) The deception of lusts (Ephesians 4:22)
 - xii) The drowning of lusts (1 Timothy 6:9)
 - xiii) The division of lusts (2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Timothy 4:3; James 1:14-15; 2 Peter 2:18; Jude 1:16)
 - xiv) The scoffing of lusts (2 Peter 3:3)
 - xv) The elusiveness of lusts (Revelation 18:14)
 - b) That war in your members (1 Peter 2:11)



2. The process of covetousness (James 4:2)
 - a. The pursuit
 - (1) The efforts of pursuit
 - a) “Ye lust.”
 - b) “Ye kill, and desire to have.” Note: This could also be related to hatred (see 1 John 3:15).
 - c) “Ye fight and war.”
 - (2) The hopelessness of pursuit
 - a) “And have not”
 - b) “And cannot obtain”
 - c) “Yet ye have not.”
 - (3) The ignorance of pursuit
 - a) What men think they want:
 - i) Wealth
 - ii) Health
 - iii) Fame
 - b) What men truly want:
 - i) Peace
 - ii) Joy
 - iii) Love
 - b. The problem—“ye ask not.” Note: This is going to require qualification in the next verse.
3. The prayer of covetousness (James 4:3)
 - a. The pursuit
 - (1) The effort of pursuit—“Ye ask”
 - (2) The hopelessness of pursuit—“and receive not”
 - (3) The ignorance of pursuit—“ye ask amiss.”
 - a) Meaning off the mark
 - b) Meaning out of order
 - c) Meaning in a faulty or improper manner
 - b. The problem
 - (1) “That ye may consume it”
 - (2) “Upon your lusts”
4. The principle taught
 - a. Your actions are brought about by the desires of your heart.
 - b. Your heart’s desires seek to mislead you into thinking that pursuit by any means will result in obtaining that which is sought.
 - c. This faulty understanding bypasses and ignores the actual benefit of a scriptural prayer life.
 - d. However, those same desires can encourage and promote unscriptural prayer lives that tend toward selfishness (see 1 John 5:14-15).
 - e. It reminds us of the dual truth taught in Psalm 37:4.
 - (1) A man who delights in the Lord will often be granted the desires of his heart.
 - (2) A man who delights in the Lord will have his desires replaced with God’s desires.

**B. The Problem of Pride (James 4:4-10)**

1. The results of pride (James 4:4-6)
 - a. The friendship of pride (James 4:4)
 - (1) The addressed
 - a) Adulterers
 - b) Adulteresses
 - (2) The application
 - a) The relationship—friendship of the world = enmity with God; enmity means hostile feeling.
 - b) The person—a friend of the world = enemy of God
 - c) The problem
 - i) Mankind is needy.
 - ii) Man's pride is exalted or abased based upon his relationships with others.
 - iii) Man's relationships with others affect his relationship with God.
 - (a) With the saved (1 John 2:9-11; 1 John 3:10-16; 1 John 4:7)
 - (b) With the lost (1 John 2:15)
 - d) The conflict
 - i) God desires the friendship of His people (see 2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23; and Exodus 33:11).
 - ii) Friendship with God is based upon obedience (John 15:12-17).
 - iii) A man cannot be a friend of God and a friend of the world.
 - b. The lust of pride (James 4:5)
 - (1) The validity of scripture
 - a) Does the scripture speak in vain? Note: This is not suggesting that this is a direct quote from scripture. Rather, the suggestion is that scripture teaches this truth.
 - b) The accomplishment of scripture (Isaiah 55:11)
 - (2) The testimony of scripture
 - a) The spirit that dwelleth in us; not the Holy Ghost
 - b) Lusteth to envy (see James 4:1-3)
 - c. The resistance of pride (James 4:6)
 - (1) The gift of God—"he giveth more grace." Note: This is the desired gift of all the actions of life (see James 4:1-3).
 - (2) The withholding of pride
 - a) The Bible associates several prominent traits with humility.
 - i) The humble man submits (James 4:7).
 - ii) He repents (James 4:8-9).
 - iii) He refuses to speak evil of his brother (James 4:11).
 - iv) He refuses to boast of himself (James 4:13-16).
 - b) The great boast of the humble man is what he gets from God (see 1 Peter 5:5-6).



2. The hindrance of pride (James 4:7-8)
 - a. Victory over Satan (James 4:7)
 - (1) The foundation of victory—grace (James 4:6)
 - a) He giveth more grace.
 - b) God...giveth more grace unto the humble.
 - c) Submit yourselves **therefore**...
 - (2) The steps to victory
 - a) Submit.
 - i) The power of submission—yourselves
 - ii) The person of submission—to God
 - (a) Submitting your whole being—spirit, soul, and body
 - (b) As purchased by and belonging to Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20)
 - b) Resist.
 - i) The power of resistance—you understood
 - ii) The person of resistance—the Devil
 - (3) The relief in victory—he will flee from you.
 - (4) The example of victory—the temptation of Christ (Luke 4:1-13)
 - a) The first temptation (Luke 4:3-4)
 - i) Submission to the Father
 - ii) Resisting Satan
 - b) The second temptation (Luke 4:5-8)
 - i) Submission to the Father
 - ii) Resisting Satan
 - c) The third temptation (Luke 4:9-12)
 - i) Submission to the Father
 - ii) Resisting Satan
 - d) The relief in victory (Luke 4:13)
 - b. Victory over self (James 4:8)
 - (1) Submission
 - a) Draw nigh to God.
 - b) He will draw nigh to you.
 - c) Note: Although a man takes steps away from fellowship with God, God will meet man halfway when man seeks to make things right.
 - (2) Resistance
 - a) The address
 - i) Ye sinners
 - ii) Ye double minded
 - b) The admonition
 - i) Cleanse your hands.
 - ii) Purify your hearts.
 - c) The implications
 - i) Sinners have filthy hands.
 - ii) Double minded people have filthy or cluttered hearts.