

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JAMES

STUDY NUMBER 8 – JAMES 4:1-12

WAR AGAINST THE BIG THREE

If you'll get your study guide ready, we're into James 4:1-12.

Remember, James is writing to a disbursed group of people. They've been scattered by the persecution that took place in the founding of the early church. And he is basically wanting to help them understand how a person grows up to a mature relationship in Christ. That's your bottom line.

In our first study we learned that God uses tests to measure progress and also provide opportunities for Christlike response in the power of the Spirit to the difficulties that come our way.

Then the Devil has designed temptation to hook and fry us, basically.

And the Word of God is primary and important, a daily intake of such. Not only to read it, but to do it. "Be doers of the word and not hearers only."

Then love is to be love without partiality. We take people as they are and in the power of the Spirit we

love one another.

A living faith will manifest itself in fruit in our fifth study. When we got to chapter 3 we talked about the tongue. The devastating effects of this smallest of instruments in our bodies. It can only be controlled by the Holy Spirit we learned.

Then in our last study, we were talking about a wisdom which comes from above. And when that wisdom, produced by the Spirit, comes from above it produces Christlike character. The problem is we have a wisdom that comes from below. The wisdom from above is characterized by pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, good fruits, unwavering, and without hypocrisy.

And the chapter ended in our last study with the fruit of righteousness will be peace. Now as we pick up chapter 4 we're not surprised that we're going to go to war. We move from peace to war. Each of us in our pursuit of Godliness and living a life that pleases and honors the Lord, we are going to be at war.

Back of all of that is Satan's strategy to keep us childish and carnal. That we would never grow up and we'd never bear fruit in the lives of others.

If you remember that kind of a picture of a fish back in James 1 when he's describing what temptation is. First of all, you've got the look "when he is drawn away."

Then you've got the lust, "by his own desires." Then you've got the lure, "he is enticed." Then you've got the conception, "when desire has conceived." And then you have the birth, "it gives birth to sin." Then you've got the growth, "and sin, when it is full-grown brings forth the fruitage of death."

Many of us just are not aware of the fact that all of the time and every day we face this warfare and that we are literally playing to his drumbeat, that is the Devil's, if we're not aware of the conflict and the things that are going on.

C. S. Lewis put it this way: "No man knows how bad he is until he has tried to be good. There is a silly idea about that good people don't know what temptation means."

(Set Apart: Discovering Personal Victory Through Holiness by Bruce Wilkinson) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Bruce Wilkinson, 1998, 2003. p. 99

A. W. Tozer answered that: "The holy man is not one who cannot sin. A holy man is one who will not sin."

(Set Apart: Discovering Personal Victory Through Holiness by Bruce Wilkinson) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Bruce Wilkinson, 1998, 2003. p. 115

He's made the decision to stand.

In Greg Laurie's book, *Loser's and Winners, Saints and Sinners.*" He says:

Isn't it interesting how the devil helps us exaggerate our pasts when he wants to pull us back? The devil will whisper in our ears, "Remember the good old days." *Yeah. That was good*, we think. The devil is clever. He doesn't say, "Remember when you were so miserable that you actually considered suicide? Remember the times you were so drunk you didn't even know where you were when you woke up? Remember when your marriage almost fell apart?" He will remind you only of the few "good times" you had in order to draw you back. He did exactly this to the Israelites, [as we read in scripture].

(Losers And Winners Saints And Sinners by Greg Laurie) New York, NY: Warner Faith. Copyright – Greg Laurie, 2005. p. 6

Ron Mehl who is a pastor in Portland, Oregon has written a great little book called *Right With God*. In this book he talks like James when it comes to the matter of the tongue:

**REALIZE THAT ONLY GOD
CAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU SPEAK.**

Every now and then you read a horrible story of a child mauled by some wild animal that had supposedly been domesticated. "It was tame!" the keepers protest. "It

never hurt anyone else.” But somehow, this “tamed” cougar, leopard or wolf suddenly reverted back to an old instinct—to lash out, to maim, to kill.

Our tongue has that same awful potential. Just when we think we have our mouths under control, something will set us off, and we will maul someone with angry or bitter words.

You’ll never be able to train your tongue to bring life instead of death. Only God can turn bitter water sweet.

(Right with God: Loving Instruction from the Father’s Heart by Ron Mehl) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ronald D. Mehl, 2003. p. 73.

These are the kinds of things that have prepared us for the fact that with these problems, where we are totally helpless in our natural resources, causes us to turn to God in order to have the victory in the war that comes at us from three different fronts.

There’s one final thing. Steve Jobs was with Pepsi Cola for a while and was brain-child of Apple Computers. He made a statement that really helped me a lot and I thought of you as well when I read this statement:

Remembering that I’ll be dead soon is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything—all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away

in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.

(Steve Jobs, cofounder of Apple and Pixar, at the Stanford University Commencement Address (June 2005) © 2008 PreachingToday.com)

You will make a right decision today if you will accept your mortality and realize that you have within your hands a power to depend upon the Spirit to leave an incredible legacy that will make an impact on generations to come. But you've got to make those decisions now. And for many of us, playing late in the game like we are, it only intensifies the fact of the importance of our choices and the things we do when we realize we're at war.

I did not know this but that flight that left the United States to go to Cairo, Egypt on October 31, 1999 was a planned crash and it cost 217 lives. Listen to this:

On October 31, 1999, a full airplane took off from JFK International Airport, New York, on the routine flight to Cairo, Egypt. The final report of the National Transportation Safety Board concluded that, a short time after take-off, the relief first officer waited for the pilot to leave the cockpit and then disengaged the autopilot. He proceeded to move the throttle levers from their cruise power setting to idle, cutting the engines. Seconds later, the airplane began to pitch nose-downward and descended into a freefall.

In the final moments before impact, the horrified pilot dashed back to his seat and battled the co-pilot for control of the plane. The pilot pulled back on his controls, desperate to bring the nose of the plunging Boeing 767 up, while the suicidal first officer pushed his own controls forward to keep the jet in its lethal dive. The result was a tragic crash of Egyptair Flight 990 into the Atlantic Ocean south of Nantucket, Massachusetts. It killed all 217 people aboard.

(National Transportation Safety Board final report on the crash of Egyptair Flight 990 on October 31, 1999; submitted by Jim Benett. © 2008 PreachingToday.com)

The battle in that airline is the battle that's going on in your heart and mind right now. So many times we have made peace with it. We think we're content with where we are. But spiritually, reality is here. We're at war and we have an enemy inside the gates and we must deal with that.

The writer says:

The battle in that airliner's cockpit is a picture of the inner life of a Christian. Each day, we choose either to hijack control of our lives—plunging ourselves into sin—or to remain locked in the direct of God's will.

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That's why I want you in the Word every morning and I want you locked in to the will of God for that day. And you take it a day at a time and stack 'em up because we don't have a whole lot of them left.

With that, I want to jump into chapter 4 and I want us to see that gaining maturity in Christ involves war on three fronts, and they're all three right here in the twelve verses:

- 1. battle with the world,**
- 2. then with the flesh—that's the nature that's within me that's still there and capable of wreaking havoc and taking control, and**
- 3. then you've got the Devil himself.**

Interesting thing about these three front wars that we're looking at is that when he spoke of the wisdom which is below in our last study, he said it's characterized as earthly, natural, and demonic. There they are. It's like he's saying, you want to live by the wisdom of down here in this earth and rule out God's sovereign wisdom from above which is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, and full of mercy and good fruits.

You want to leave that out and you want to live by this, then you're living by a wisdom that is earthly. It is earthbound. This is all there is. It's natural. It comes

from the heart of a rebellious sinful man and it's demonic. It's satanically inspired. There's your three enemies in the war on the three fronts.

Let's jump into the text.

v. 1 From what source do conflicts and quarrels among you come? Do they not come from this, namely your passions which are struggling in your members?

He starts with a question then he asks another one to answer the first one. Basically he's saying, in your interpersonal relationships, what is it that brings about conflict and quarrels among you? Where does that come from? And then he says, "Do they not come from this, namely your passions which are struggling in your members?"

It's those passionate, earthly, natural, selfish, carnal desires. When you turn it over and the controls are taken by yourself rather than the Lord, that old nature rises to the surface and it acts in this way, totally contrary to the agenda and the program the Lord has in making you more Christlike. And it's embarrassing to us when somebody cuts in front of us and we lose it. Or something is said critical in our marriage and we blow it by just blasting everybody.

These are the kind of things James is talking about. That's part of the war. We can act so natural. We can act so dumb or stupid in things that we say and do.

Paul told Timothy: “no man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life, but he’s one who wants to please the Lord in the battle.”

You just need to do a little study on warfare in Scripture. You’ll find Ephesians 6 has all the equipment that you need. You constantly see the battle that’s going on in the lives of those trying to become mature believers.

Maturity is simply reflected in your success in the warfare on three fronts. And if you’re at peace and in comfort this morning, then bless God. Thank Him that in the war you’ve learned how to take the armor that’s provided and you’re living a life that’s growing and changing and becoming dynamic, as far as the Lord is concerned.

Word and the flesh and the Devil. But the first problem is the passion. It’s this passion that is within us, it’s this old nature—the flesh.

Paul writes a very extensive letter of instruction to the Corinthian assembly. The church is divided. They are following leaders instead of the Lord. They are people who have refused to grow up. And when it gets to chapter 3 it’s like he just levels them.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

Dear brothers, I have been talking to you as though you were still just babies in the Christian life, who are not following the Lord, but your own desires. I cannot talk to you as I would to healthy Christians who are filled with the Spirit. I have had to feed you with milk and not with solid food because you couldn't digest anything stronger. And even now you still have to be fed on milk for you are still only baby Christians, controlled by your own desires, not God's. When you are jealous of one another and divide up into quarreling groups, doesn't that prove you are still babies, wanting your own way? In fact, you are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord at all.

I mean, he cuts to the chase and says this is what happens when the flesh is dominant. And that means that every single one of us have got to deal daily with the issue of allowing the Spirit of God to control us so that He continues to bless and He continues to work in lives, and He continues to grow up people.

Now the question comes, how can I know if I'm in the flesh or in the Spirit? That's a good question, isn't it? Well somebody made a long list. I have about 60 things that can characterize living in the flesh. Now don't worry, I'm not going to read the whole list.

Are you conscious of a secret spirit of pride? because of your natural gifts and abilities,

**an important independent spirit,
stiffness and preciseness,
love of human praise,
a secret fondness to be noticed,
love of supremacy,
stirring of anger or impatience which, worst of all, you
call nervousness or holy indignation,
a touchy, sensitive spirit,
a disposition to resent and retaliate when you are
reproved of or contradicted,
self-will,
a stubborn unteachable spirit,
harsh, sarcastic expressions,
an arguing, talkative spirit,
an unyielding, headstrong disposition,
a disposition to criticize and pick flaws when set aside
and unnoticed,
a peevish, fretful spirit,
an unpleasant sensation in view of the great prosperity
and success of somebody else,
a disposition to speak of the faults and failings rather
than the gifts and virtues of those more talented and
appreciated than yourself,
are you given to exaggeration,
a lack of quietness and confidence in God?**

And the rest of the list goes on.

**Those are just a few things that reveal the carnal or the
fleshly heart.**

The first battle is with ourselves internally. To be able to reign in the power of the Spirit, the human natural response of retaliation and to grant forgiveness and be willing to do that.

Pastor Tim Brown tells this story. Listen to this:

Some time ago, I was having lunch in McDonald's with my daughter and mother-in-law. We were enjoying a pleasant conversation when a man, with his wife and children, plopped down at a nearby table. The man was someone who in the past had hurt me very deeply. We faked pleasantries and exchanged hellos, but I could feel my blood begin to boil at the thought of what he had done to me. This person had wounded me badly, and I was surprised about how much hurt I still felt.

My family and I gobbled down our food and on the way out of the restaurant I overheard "my enemy" and his wife arguing because neither had any money to purchase the food they had ordered. Their three kids were screaming for their Happy Meals. The couple was embarrassed. My first thought was, *Praise God, there is justice in this world. He deserves every bit of embarrassment he's feeling, and I'm so glad I got to see this.*

Suddenly God spoke to me through the text I had read that morning. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If

it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink'" (Romans 12:17-20).

God was saying to me: Here's your chance to be set free of your pain and overcome your hurt. I knew I had a choice either to obey or bask in my bitterness. Somewhat reluctantly I reached into my wallet, pulled out \$20, and gave it to this man who had been my enemy.

"Have lunch on me," I said with tears in my eyes.

(*Citation:* Tim Brown, Clovis, California. © 2008 PreachingToday.com)

This is the kind of personal witness for Christ. We have opportunities every day to make decisions to do the spiritual thing rather than the normal response of the flesh. And if you're here today and you're sick and tired of the hypocrisy and the phoniness of the flesh, then welcome to the spiritual realm. And the power of the Spirit can cause you to rise above the bitterness that might be in your family, in your business, or in your personal relationships somewhere and God is talking to you this morning about that very thing in this passage.

Progress toward maturity is going to come by successfully handling the flesh, that nature that's within. He goes on to say in verse 2, it's going to affect your prayer life.

v. 2 You are desiring and not having. You are murdering and envying and not able to obtain. You are quarrelling and fighting. You are not having because you are not asking.

What he's saying in essence, God is not in the business of just filling your agenda as you come to Him with all your requests. And selfish requests that are outside of the will of God are going to get a no. And what he's saying here is that when you pray selfishly, in the flesh rather than prompted by the Spirit so that you know the desires of God even before you make requests.

John said that in:

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence we have in him, if that we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, we know that we have the petitions we desired of Him.

Because we are praying those things which have been prompted by the will of God. But when you've got quarreling and fighting and all of these other things

going on, the flesh is totally out of control, then you are actually murdering people's character and you're envying and you're not able to attain.

All of these things are the work of Satan. He wants to foster dissension, antagonism, and misunderstanding, to wreck harmonious family and happy relationships.

The work of the Spirit of Christ is the very opposite. It is to reconcile, to harmonize, to enlighten, to cement happy relationships. Christians of all people should be promoters of enlightenment, understanding and harmony, both among themselves and all the people.

So James is hitting hard on this old nature in us. And when it acts it's embarrassing and we must be doing battle daily with that nature.

3. "You are quarrelling and fighting."

4. "You are not having because you are not asking."

v. 3 You are asking and you are not receiving because you are asking with wrong motives [purpose], in order that you might spend it on your [personal] pleasures.

The big question comes, every time you pray. Do you say "Thy will be done" and you really mean it? Or are you saying "My desires be satisfied"? That will tell you right there whether your prayer is going to get out of

the rafters or not. If in fact you really want His will and you're agonizing over knowing it, then it will be revealed. But if you are yielding to your passions and you're praying from the flesh, then you've got to say "My desires be satisfied."

OK, war over here. We got what? We got that nature within us, the flesh. Front number one. Let's move to front number two, verse 4. We've got the world around us. Look what he says.

v. 4 Adulteresses, are you not knowing that your friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would desire to be a friend of the world is being made an enemy of God.

Now, one thing you need to understand, we are witnesses to the world. Right? This is a system designed to rule God completely out. We stand against that system but we love the sinners in the world. We do everything we can to build relationships with them and bring them to the cross of Christ. Right? He's talking about the system of the world.

Remember from the ten commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And people say "I don't have any idol that I'm worshipping or anything like that." And they forget to recognize that the very thing God said about the idols, the golden calf, and all of that stuff in the Old Testament, He called them "Adulteresses" and adulterers because they betrayed

the relationship that was singularly for Him. And to James, the Lord's brother, in the New Testament would tell us that when we love this present world more than we love the Lord and we give this present world more of our time and our energy and our effort than we give to the Lord and we only work the Lord into the leftovers, that God can come along and say "You're having a love affair with the world and you're adulteresses and adulterers!" Very same conclusion.

Set your affection on things above and not on the things of the earth.

John says:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world and the world is passing away and the lusts thereof.

Don't live that way.

Adulteresses, don't you know that your friendship with this world affects the heart of God.

"Whosoever therefore would desire to be a friend of the world" is making himself an enemy of God?

That takes me back to Matthew 6:24 when he's doing that great first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. He says:

Matthew 6:24

No man can serve two masters for he will either hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

It's late in the game my friends. You've got choices to make. Are you going to chose the Spirit and provide forgiveness and say no to the passions of your heart? And you are going to come along and see the world system and you're going to say no to the world system because you want to say yes to the King of kings and Lord of lords and look forward to that glorious day of the freedom that is ours in Christ when we will rule and reign with Him forever.

The frustration here is divided love and a divided heart. I think one of the most distressing passages of Scripture, is in 2 Timothy. This is the last book that Paul wrote and the last chapter, and the last final verses of that chapter. Paul is waiting because the pen of inspiration is going to be laid down and he's going to be beheaded down the street in just a matter of months.

He writes:

2 Timothy 4:10

Demas forsook me having loved this present world.

He finked out. He left. When the heat was on, when the opportunity to bear fruit was there, Demas checked it in and chose the comfortable life of the world.

You see, you make decisions. And when you make them late they can get very complicated if they are not Spirit-inspired and Spirit-directed. That's the message that's coming across loud and clear to us in this passage.

Paul told the Romans:

Romans 12:2

Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is a good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Allow Him to transform you and keep your focus on heaven.

v. 5 Or, are you supposing the scripture is saying to no purpose that He is yearning jealously over the Spirit which He has caused to dwell in us?

This believed that the Holy Spirit is there. That's His claim to ownership. He's dwelling in you. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price,

therefore glorify God in your body and your Spirit which are His. Not yours. They belong to Him.

God wants everything. He wants your total and full and complete heart-devotion.

v. 6 And He is giving greater grace. For this reason, He is saying: “God is resisting the proud, but is giving grace to the humble.”

When you're proud and you're fighting your own battle there isn't any grace available. But when you realize that you've gotten whipped two or three times and blindsided in several situations, you really finally wake up and learn how to dependant upon Him in battle and that He'll provide the grace that will lead to victory.

Now what you have in this passage, are **TEN COMMANDS** coming from the pen of the apostle James and he's simply telling us “This is the way to get it done, man!”

Number 1:

v. 7 Be subject therefore to God, but resist the devil and he will flee from you.

You say, “Well I thought he was going to be a whole lot harder to deal with than that.”

No, you just stand up and say “No!” He's a defeated foe.

1 John 4:4

... greater is He that is in you than he that is the world.”

He is going to give the victory. James uses the Greek word there that means “to take a decisive stand.”

So here I stand, God help me! I resist your schemes, your temptations, and your plans.

Florence Nightingale had it right. She said:

Life is a hard fight, a struggle, a wrestling with the principle of evil, hand to hand, foot to foot. Every inch the way is disputed.

(The Invisible War: What Every Believer Needs to Know About Satan, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare by Chip Ingram) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Chip Ingram, 2006. p. 25.

Such is the case.

Take the armor and stand and gain the victory.

A World War II bomber pilot said:

“If you’re taking flak, you’re over the target.”

(Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens
by Neil Cole) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Copyright – Neil Cole, 2005. p. 10.

Just stay in there. Be faithful and realize that Satan is indeed a defeated foe.

Chip Ingram in his book, The Invisible War gives you five little snippets. Think of this.

- 1. Satan is a defeated foe.**
- 2. Jesus destroyed the works of the devil on the cross.**
- 3. We are victors in Christ.**
- 4. We have the power and resources to resist Satan and demonic attacks.**
- 5. We must learn how to put on the full armor of God to experience in daily living the victory we already possess.**

(The Invisible War: What Every Believer Needs to Know About Satan, Demons, and Spiritual Warfare
by Chip Ingram) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright –
Chip Ingram, 2006. pp. 22-23.

Then we have dealt with the warfare on the second front. But never ever get up and minimize His power.

Peter says:

1 Peter 5:8

Be careful, watch out for attacks from Satan your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion looking for some victim to tear apart.

Resist him. Christ lives in you. Resist him.

1 John 4:4

... greater is He that is in you than he that is the world.”

He promised to never leave you nor forsake you. Look at the next one, number three.

v. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. [Number four] Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded.

In other words, get focused. Don't got flesh-Spirit, world-Christ, constantly battling back and forth, tossed to and fro but get it on track and stay focused.

v. 9 Lament [Number six. Now that's a weird word to you. It means wretchedness. It means to grieve over our wretchedness. You say, I've never done that. Well, it might not be a bad habit for all of us to try. If you've read any of the Puritan writers and some of those great saints of the past, they took plenty of time to grieve. The apostle Paul said: "O wretched man that I am,

who's going to deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). Job said: "Wherefore I abhor myself and I repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). Isaiah said: "Woe is me for I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips and I live in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). It was a part and parcel of the culture of men who walked with God to recognize their own sinful wretchedness. And then it led to a mourning over that.] **and mourn** [In the beatitudes Jesus said "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). And they even went so far as to weep] **and weep;** [Because of their sinful condition. It's amazing to me when the Word of God begins to convict, how tears begin to roll down cheeks.

Jesus wept when He saw Mary and everybody else grieving over Lazarus' death, He wept. He looked on the city of Jerusalem and He said "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Those who've stoned and killed the prophets, how often I've wanted to gather you together as a hen would gather her chickens under her wings but you would not." All those words said in tears. In the Garden of Gethsemane there was strong crying and weeping. Number nine] **let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy into gloominess.**

And number ten, the biggest one of all.

v. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Humility is a Biblical, honest appraisal of ourselves. It means we come to relationship with a focus on others and not on ourselves. The apostle shows us the transformation requires the practice of sacrificial, other people relationships.

John Ortberg makes this great statement, it's very insightful.

One of the hardest things in the world is to stop being a prodigal son without turning into the elder brother.

**(The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – John Ortberg, 1997, 2002. p. 113.**

Get the picture? To stop being the prodigal son is in humility and brokenness, but to be the elder brother is to say “I don't want to have any part in that.”

v. 11 Stop speaking evil of one another, brethren.

[That is a negative present command. It means that it's going on. They are speaking evil one of another.] The one who is speaking evil of his brother, or finding fault with his brother, is speaking evil of the law and finding fault with the law. Now if you are finding fault with the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.

Don't criticize. Do your own work in your personal life and accept others as a gift to whom you can serve and give of yourself.

December 29th, the *Daily Bread* was good, I clipped it knowing that there would be a time to use it and here it is:

A quote in *Sports Illustrated* magazine expresses a truth that we as people of faith sometimes neglect: “What counts most in creating a successful team is not how compatible its players are, but how they deal with incompatibility.” When we don’t get along with others, we are tempted to ignore them and shove them aside.

God calls us to take a different approach: “All of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this” (1 Peter 3:8-9).

Oswald Chambers reminds us in *My Utmost For His Highest*: “In the spiritual life, beware of walking according to natural affinities. Everyone has natural affinities; some people we like and others we do not like. We must never let those likes and dislikes rule in our Christian life. If we ‘walk in the light,’ as God is in the light, God will give us communion with people for whom we have no natural affinity.”

It is natural to have likes and dislikes. But when we seek to honor the Lord in our relationships, compassion, love, humility, and kindness are the God-ordered, supernatural steps in dealing with incompatibility. — David C. McCasland

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, December 29, 2004)

Paul says to the Ephesians saints:

Ephesians 4:1-3 (Phillips)

As God’s prisoner, then, I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience, making allowances for each other because you love each other. . . .

The Greek text for that would read: “Bearing with one another.”

Means literally to put up with people, their quirks, their failures, their idiosyncrasies. Even after we exercise humility, gentleness and patience, some people will still require putting up with. Why not do it out of love for Christ who puts up with them and with us.

v. 12 One only is a Lawgiver and a Judge, He who is able to save and to destroy; but as for you, who are you, the one finding fault with your fellowman?

May you have personal victory.

There are five lessons that come out of that study. This little devotional on marriage really spoke to me.

When one mate holds a grudge against the other, the signs of conflict radiate from both partners.

A marriage without kindness, compassion, and forgiveness lacks the oil that makes a relationship run smoothly. Because grudges remain and are constantly pointed out, a load of “sand” has destroyed a fine-tuned machine. Suddenly its engine grinds to a halt. What you have isn’t a relationship anymore—it’s a wreck.

The damage probably began with sin. Undoubtedly, there was something the hurt partner “just couldn’t” forgive. Instead of seeking resolution, the couple took the easy way out and traded hurtful barbs. Kindness and compassion went to the side, and emotional sniping took its place.

If your relationship has sand in it, wash it out with forgiveness and fill it with kindness and compassion. Don’t turn your marriage into a broken-down engine ...

(365 Daily Devotions for Couples by Toni Sorter and Pamela McQuade) Barbour Publishing. p. 102.

And I would say, another victim to the world of flesh and the Devil.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Christian warfare is against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

LESSON #2: If you aren't fighting, you aren't growing.

LESSON #3: The Christian life is a fight all the way home.

LESSON #4: The key to victory is in the power of the Spirit.

LESSON #5: A person living in the flesh cannot expect God to be answering His prayers.

STUDY NUMBER EIGHT - WAR AGAINST THE BIG THREE — **JAMES 4:1-12**

KEY VERSE 4:1

v. 1 From what source do conflicts and quarrels among you come? Do they not come from this, namely your passions which are struggling in your members?

v. 2 You are desiring and not having. You are murdering and envying and not able to obtain. You are quarrelling and fighting. You are not having because you are not asking.

v. 3 You are asking and you are not receiving because you are asking with wrong motives, in order that you might spend it on your pleasures.

v. 4 Adulteresses, are you not knowing that your friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would desire to be a friend of the world is being made an enemy of God.

v. 5 Or, are you supposing the scripture is saying to no purpose that He is yearning jealously over the Spirit which He has caused to dwell in us?

v. 6 And He is giving greater grace. For this reason, He is saying: "God is resisting the proud, but is giving grace to the humble."

v. 7 Be subject therefore to God, but resist the devil and he will flee from you.

v. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded.

v. 9 Lament and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy into gloominess.

v.10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

v.11 Stop speaking evil of one another, brethren. The one who is speaking evil of his brother, or finding fault with his brother, is speaking evil of the law and finding fault with the law. Now if you are finding fault with the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.

v.12 One only is a Lawgiver and a Judge, He who is able to save and to destroy; but as for you, who are you, the one finding fault with your fellowman?

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read James 4:1-12 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. From where do wars and fightings come, according to James?

3. Why are we not having the things we are desiring, according to verses 2 & 3?

4. What does friendship with the world mean in verse 4? How does God feel about it?

5. What is God's attitude towards the "proud" and the "humble" in verse 6?

6. What two things are we asked to do in verse 7?

7. What three things are we asked to do in verse 8?

8. What will the Lord do for us if we humble ourselves before Him in verse 10?

10. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

11. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Christian warfare is against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

LESSON #2: If you aren't fighting, you aren't growing.

LESSON #3: The Christian life is a fight all the way home.

LESSON #4: The key to victory is in the power of the Spirit.

LESSON #5: A person living in the flesh cannot expect God to be answering His prayers.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
