

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

**Friendship with the World
James 4:1-6
Part Seven**

We are back once again to the Epistle of James. And we will once again look at **James 4:1-6**.

(1) "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? (2) You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. (4) You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (5) Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?" (6) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." In these verses James gives to us one more test of living faith. James gives to us one more test of saving faith. And what is that test? We have called it the "Friendship with the World test."

Genuine spiritual life and faithful Christian living involve separation from the world and all its countless contaminations. If we can remain unstained by the world, the genuineness of our faith will be clearly evident and we will pass this very important test.

One of the ways that we can know if we have become a friend of the world is if our various relationships are characterized by turmoil.

First of all, turmoil in our relationship with others. What does **James 4:1** say? **"What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?"**

Secondly, turmoil in our relationship with ourselves. What does **James 4:1-3** say? **"(1) What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? (2) You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."** Interpersonal conflicts are fueled by an internal conflict. James identifies three causes of this internal conflict.

The first cause is uncontrolled desire.

Look at end of V. 1 **".... Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?"**

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

The second cause is unfulfilled desire (V. 2)

V. 2 “You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.”

The third cause is selfish desire (VV. 2-3)

Let us look at verse 2 and then also read verse 3. **“You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.”** Then it says, **“... You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”**

James, in this section of Scripture, is stating the obvious. Those uncontrolled and unfulfilled desires that we might experience are selfish, and James is very quick to point out in respect to prayer that when we pray with selfish desires our prayers are worthless.

Praying according to the will of God is the underlying condition for successful praying. It is the man whose heart supremely yearns for God’s glory and the accomplishment of His will who prays meaningfully and effectively. **1 John 5:14, “And this is the confidence that we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”**

There are a number of prayer promises that Christ gives us in the Gospels, but it is important to note that each of these promises is conditional and is really just another way of stating 1 John 5:14. How did Christ restate 1 John 5:14 in the Gospels?

CHRIST RESTATED 1 JOHN 5:14 AS “HAVING FAITH IN GOD.” We find this condition stated in the story of the powerless disciples in Matt. 17:20-21 and Mark 9:23-29, and then we find it again in the story of the withered fig tree in Matt. 21:18-22 and Mark 11:20-24. Exercising faith while praying is not exercising faith in faith or faith in our request but rather it is exercising faith in God. Having faith in God is believing that He knows what is best for our lives in light of who we are and what we are facing. Therefore, because of this confidence, our desire will be that His will would be done rather than ours. What is another instance of Christ restating 1 John 5:14?

CHRIST RESTATED 1 JOHN 5:14 AS “ABIDING IN CHRIST.” We find this condition in John 15:7, **“If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”** How can we know if we are abiding in Christ? We can know when Christ’s words are abiding in us, or in other words, when we are feeding and meditating on the Scriptures for the purpose of applying them to our lives. Therefore those who abide in Christ are at their core submissive to Christ and His Word. Abiding in Christ is once again just a restatement in essence of 1 John 5:14. What is another instance of Christ in essence restating 1 John 5:14?

CHRIST RESTATED 1 JOHN 5:14 AS ASKING “IN MY NAME.” We find this condition stated five times in three separate passages in the Gospel of John, all of which were made during what is commonly referred to as the Upper Room Discourse.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

John 14:12-14, “(12) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, and the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. (13) And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.”

John 16:23-24, “ (23) And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. (24) Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.”

Five different times in the course of that single night Christ emphasized the importance of praying in His name. What did Christ mean when he gave these instructions to His disciples?

Praying in His name does not mean ending our prayers with the phrase “in Jesus' name.” How many titles are given to Christ in the Scriptures? There are well over 100 different titles that could be used to identify Christ. Therefore, we have to conclude that where no title is mentioned, no title is intended!

Had this been His purpose, He surely would have indicated that and would have plainly identified the correct title to use: “In Jesus' name,” “In Emmanuel’s name,” “In Christ’s name” etc.! In addition to this, it is striking that of all the prayers recorded in the Book of Acts and the Epistles, not one of them closes with a fixed terminology incorporating a name. Does this mean that the Apostles and early Christians didn’t pray in His name? Of course not! But praying in His name did not involve the use of a title.

Therefore praying in His name is not ending our prayers with a fixed phrase, “This we ask in Jesus’ name.” It is not a rabbit’s foot to hang on the end of a prayer to give it punch!

Having said this, I don’t want you to think that I am saying that a Christian is necessarily sinning when he closes his prayer by saying, “in Jesus' name.” In fact, I do this all the time. What I am saying is that simply reciting those words does not guarantee us that we are in reality praying in His name! The concept is far deeper and more significant than a formula.

What precisely did the Lord mean when he asked us to pray in His name? Praying in Jesus' name is seeking to pray just as Jesus would want us to pray in light of His revealed will (John 14:12-14). Or in other words, it is seeing ourselves asking the Father to carry on Christ’s life and His work through us. I believe Paul expressed this attitude well in **Phil. 1:27** when he said, **“For me to live is Christ.”**

As we have seen with other conditions for answered prayer, praying in Jesus' name is just once again a restatement of **1 John 5:14**.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

But why would he phrase this condition one more time in the way that he phrased it in these particular passages?

Remember what I shared with you about this particular prayer condition? It was shared five different times in three different passages all in the Upper Room Discourse. What is significant about this? Jesus, the very next day following this discourse, would be betrayed, tried, and crucified. He was about to physically leave them. But He would not be leaving them without the power to continue His work and to do what He wanted them to do. Listen to **John 14:12-14**, “**(12) Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. (13) And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.**” What does He mean by “greater works”? Certainly not more remarkable miracles. He is referring to the wider work that He would carry out through the apostles. And that is exactly what happened. Listen to **Heb. 2:3-4** “**How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, (4) God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.**” These are the greater works that Christ spoke about in **John 14:12-14**.

How did these believers who had heard Christ, or, more specifically, how did these apostles who had heard Christ do such mighty works? They prayed in Jesus' name. Or in other words, they prayed for mighty deeds to be done through them based on what Christ revealed to them in the upper room and other places in the Gospels.

We need to pray in the very same way, and when we pray in this way it carries an incredible weight of authority. As you know, at one point in my life a long time ago, I was a policeman for the city of Santa Ana. During that time, I gave out many citations and made many different arrests. And each time I turned on my red lights or each time I placed an individual under arrest it was “in the name of the law.” All of the authority of the law was behind me. Standing behind me in the enforcement of that law were all the resources of the Santa Ana Police Department. And if that was not enough, also standing behind me were all the personnel of the California National Guard, armed with bazookas, tanks, and howitzers. When we pray in the name of Jesus, standing in His place in this world, seeking to live our lives as He would live His life and seeking to do His work as He would do His work, we also possess authority; an incredible amount of authority.

Does this mean that everything prayed in Jesus' name will in fact happen? Only to the degree to which our prayers truly would represent Him. Sometimes we will know exactly how we should pray. At other times we will have a sense of how we should pray. Then there will be times when we don't have a clue how we should pray. Should we, when we are in doubt or are clueless, not pray? And the answer is, of course not! Listen to these very wonderful words in **Romans 8:26-27**, “**(26) And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; (27) and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.**” Not knowing what the Lord's will might be is not nearly as important as desiring it (Rom. 8:26-27).

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Before I get up in front of you to preach, I need to prepare my life and my mission. I want my life to be an expression of Christ and I want my work to be an expression of His work. In seeking to do this, I repeatedly do the following each week.

First of all, I take time to make sure that I have confessed any sin that I might have committed and ask for forgiveness. Will that request be answered? And the answer is yes! **1 John 1:9**, “**If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**” I know that that request has been answered. Christ is pure; I want to be pure.

I also ask that I might give the message that I am about to bring, heartily; that I would not hold back any energy that I might have because I am tired. Will that request be answered? And the answer is yes! The Lord, giving instruction to Christian slaves in **Col. 3:23**, said to them, “**Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.**” Certainly I believe that this would also be true for my life, in involving myself in the teaching of His word.

I also ask that you might receive the message that I have prepared from His word; that you might grow by it. Will that request be answered? Yes and No! Yes in the sense that I know, based on God’s Word, that He is going to use this message in your life to accomplish His ultimate purpose for you if you are a Christian, and that the message I will give will be helpful in bringing about this end. How do I know this? Because that is what **Romans 8:28** tells me, “**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**” But do I have any guarantee that you will leave here today and be fired up to pray in His Name? And the answer to that is No!

There may be some professing Christians here who are this morning in a spiritual stupor. I don’t know this, but He does. So while I pray, " Lord, let them receive this message so that they might grow by it," the Spirit might be praying to the Father, "Father, discipline this individual or that individual so that he or she might have a more teachable spirit."

CONCLUSION

We must be careful not to become contaminated by the world, abandoning the practice of prayer because we trust in ourselves more than in the promises of God.

We must be careful that we would not become contaminated by the world so that when we pray our prayers are being driven by selfish desires.

Hopefully, when we come to prayer we will come in the name of Jesus, seeking that His will would be done in and through our lives so that His work might continue to go forward in and through us.