

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Friendship with the World James 4:1-6 Part Ten

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. We have called this test the "Friendship with the World test."

One way for us to know if we have begun to become a friend of the world is if our various relationships are characterized by turmoil.

Turmoil in our relationship with others (V. 1)

Turmoil in our relationship with ourselves (VV. 1-3)

Turmoil in our relationship with the Lord (VV. 4-6)

This is the particular section of Scripture that we have been looking at. Let us read **James 4:4-6**, "**(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."** The turmoil that professing believers experience with the Lord as they become contaminated by the world is seen in three different areas. First of all, it will be seen in their hostility toward God.

HOSTILITY TOWARD GOD (V.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." When we become friendly with the world when; we get tangled up in the strings of the satanic world system and its voracious appetite for pleasure while neglecting the Scriptures, we have acted hostilely toward the Lord. We may not feel as if we have acted hostilely toward Him, but that is exactly what we have done. And if this happens, we have committed "spiritual adultery."

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This has far-reaching ramifications, not for the one who has occasional lapses, but for the one who persists in their flirtatious and adulterous relationship with the world. These are the ones James tells us are the enemies of God. Therefore they expose their profession of faith to be false and they are in truth unsaved.

The turmoil that professing believers experience with the Lord when they express friendship with the world is not only manifested in their hostile actions but also in their disregard of the Scriptures.

DISREGARD OF THE SCRIPTURES (V. 5)

Let us read **V. 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?”** As I shared with you two weeks ago, I believe that this translation is not the best translation. The NKJV has a better translation which is **“Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose, the Spirit He caused to live in us longs jealously.”** A similar translation is found in the marginal notes in the NAS translation. Professing Christians who continue to flirt with the world are not only acting hostilely but are also choosing to ignore, to disregard what the Scriptures teach about the Lord’s jealousy (Exod. 20:4,5; 34:14; Zech. 8:2).

The Scriptures are clear the Lord is a jealous God. And when the Spirit of God comes into our lives, He will not sit there unmoved by our flirtatious indiscretions. Jealousy is an essential element of true love.

We are the brides of Christ, and the Holy Spirit does not want us to go somewhere else to “have our needs met.” And when we do, it stirs Him up and it deeply grieves Him. If we can truly appreciate the Lord’s affection for us and understand the strong painful feelings of jealousy that are stirred up when we become flirtatious with the world, it should be an effective tool to keep us from wandering.

The turmoil that professing believers experience with the Lord as they express friendship with the world is seen in three different areas. First of all, it will be seen in their hostility toward God. Secondly, in their disregard of Scripture, and lastly, in their prideful spirit.

A PROUD SPIRIT (V. 6)

Let us read **V. 6, “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”** When we are acting hostilely toward the Lord by pursuing the values and thinking of the world; when we are tempted to disregard the Scriptures and what they declare about God’s jealousy, we are acting proudly. Our theme song might as well be the Frank Sinatra song “My Way.” Let me share the lyrics of the first verse with you.

“And now the end is near, and so I face the final curtain. My friend, I’ll say it clear, I’ll state my case, of which I’m certain. I’ve lived a life that’s full, I traveled each and every highway. And more, much more than this, I did it my way.”

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This attitude of doing things our way is prideful. The acts that come from this attitude are acts of hostility toward God, and it shows our total disregard for the Scriptures and what the Scriptures teach concerning God's jealousy.

The word "proud" (HUPEREPHANOS) literally means "to appear (PHAINOMAI) above (HUPER)." When we choose to make ourselves a friend of the world, we are not only betraying the Lord's love for us, but we are telling the Lord we do not need him. We are saying that He is a non-issue in our lives. We are saying that what he has told us in His word is of no value. We are saying that what He has commanded us to do with our lives is unimportant. We are in essence saying we can do better on our own. When we do this we are exalting ourselves over the Lord and we are therefore acting proudly.

Let me ask you some questions. Have you daily been spending time meditating on God's word, or have you been doing things, "your way." ? Are you striving to set time aside to commune with the Lord in prayer or have you been doing things, "Your way."? Have you committed yourself to be more involved with your brothers and sisters in Christ here in this church or have you been doing things "your way"? Are you searching for ways to serve this fellowship with your gifts and abilities or have you found yourself doing things "your way"? Are you praying for opportunities to share your faith or are you simply doing things "your way"? Are you seeking to use the money the Lord has entrusted to you to advance His kingdom and to perform His will or are you just doing things "your way"?

Those professing believers who act hostilely toward the Lord and choose to disregard His Scriptures are in essence saying, "I will do it my way." This attitude is prideful. And those who are characterized by this attitude need to be warned.

Professing believers who have begun to flirt with the world will not receive help from the Lord; rather the Lord will actively oppose them. What does the verse tell us? **"God is opposed to the proud."** The word "opposed" (ANTITOSSOMAI) was used as a military term depicting a full army ready for battle. God is in full battle array, as it were, against the proud.

Not too long ago a woman in our congregation chose to file for divorce and leave her husband. Certainly the husband was no saint, but he had been faithful to her and wanted to preserve the relationship. But even after having it clearly spelled out for her from the Bible what the Lord would have her to do, she continued to pursue the divorce. Even though she is a professing believer, she has begun to think like the world thinks. She has begun to value what the world values. And in doing this, she has become prideful, in essence saying, "I will do it my way."

If I were in her position and I were doing what she is doing, I would be fearful. Why? God is opposed to the proud. Whether it is today or tomorrow or the day after, I can certainly know that I would reap what I have pridefully sown.

If you are here this morning and you know that you have begun to act and think more like the world than a disciple of Christ, I urge you, I plead with you, turn from your flirtation with the world! Not only for the Lord's sake but for your sake.

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But you might say, “But I can’t. It is just too hard.” Or you might say, “But I can’t. The pull of the flesh is just too great.” But we must get beyond this worldly thinking and think right thoughts. And what is the right thought? Look again at **V. 6, “But He gives a greater grace.”** We don’t have to act hostilely toward the Lord. We do not have to disregard the Scriptures. We do not have to continue to act pridefully. Why? Because he gives a greater grace.

This is not saving grace, for every believer has that. Rather, it is literally “greater grace” -- God’s gracious supply to live as we ought in a fallen world. As Augustine put it, “God gives what He demands.” There is always, for the believer, greater grace. This is without doubt one of the most comforting texts in all of Scripture.

We do not have to succumb to the enticements of the world and its inducements, acting hostilely toward the Lord, provoking him to jealousy, and displaying a prideful attitude. Why? Because He gives “greater grace.”

This verse means that there will always be enough grace, regardless of our situation or needs -- always. The writer of Hebrews confidently tells us, **“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need” (Heb. 4:16).** We have no need that outstrips his grace, and we never will!! Even if we fall into abject sin, there is a stream of grace, as Paul said: **“But where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Rom. 5:20b).** Let us be assured of this: that for daily need there is daily grace; for sudden need there is sudden grace; for overwhelming need there is overwhelming grace.

John Newton the author of “Amazing Grace” knew this well: Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come: ‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.”

An artist once submitted a painting of Niagara Falls for an exhibition, but neglected to give it a title. The gallery, faced with the need to supply one, came up with these words: “MORE TO FOLLOW.” Old Niagara falls, spilling over billions of gallons per year for thousands of years, has more than met the needs of those below and is a fit emblem of the flood of God’s grace. There is always more to follow!

Listen to the words of the hymn, “He giveth more grace” written by Annie Flint: “He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more grace when the labors increase; to added afflictions He addeth His mercy, to multiplied trials His multiplied peace. When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done: When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our father’s full giving is only begun. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundary known unto men; For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.” There is grace available for you no matter what your personal situation might be. Whatever our condition or situation, He is always ready to “give us more grace.”

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He gives grace to overcome personal weaknesses. If you find yourself repeatedly succumbing to sinful pleasures, God will give you more grace, if you ask. If you have fed on cherished hatreds, but now see that the feast has really been the devil's feast and the main course your soul, and you want deliverance, He will give you more grace.

He gives grace to overcome insurmountable obstacles. Perhaps a terminal disease; there is more grace. Or a loved one's death; there is more grace. Or a shattering divorce, there is more grace. Or the bitter ashes of failure, there is more grace.

He gives grace to do the impossible. If God is calling you to sell all you have and go to the ends of the earth to share the gospel, or whatever He asks, there will always be more grace. "For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again."

Is there any condition to receiving this river of grace? Yes - a very slight one for some people, and a huge mountain for others. James quotes **Prov. 3:34**, "**God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.**"

God has always given His grace to the humble. In **Is. 66:2** we read, "**to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.**" Just as pride is the root of all sin, so humility is the root of all righteousness. It is only when the things of the world are no longer admired and sought, when self-concern is replaced with concern for God's glory, that God's Spirit can work His sovereign and gracious will in our heart, changing it from being an enemy to being a friend.

The Lord continually imparts His grace to the humble (TAPEINOS). The humble, deeply conscious of their sinfulness and need, gladly acknowledge their dependence on God and rest in His all-sufficiency. Like empty vessels, they are ready to receive His grace, and His help goes far beyond anything they deserve or can rightly expect.

CONCLUSION

What is the theme song of your life? Is it "My Way" or is it "GOD'S WAY"? If you realize that the theme song "MY WAY" has always characterized your life, you have failed the Friendship with the World test and you now need to confess your sin and embrace Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

If you are a believer, and suddenly realize that you have fallen into Satan's trap and have begun to flirt with the world and it's theme song of "MY WAY," I would simply encourage you to **HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE THE LORD, CONFESSING YOUR SIN, AND REST IN THIS TRUTH: HE GIVES GREATER GRACE.**