



James

Living Right in a Wrong World!

Living Right with Humility!

James 4:1-10

Message #10 of 15 – S972

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living Right with Humility!

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Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 4**
- Today, we continue the series: **James - Living Right in a Wrong World!**
- God is truth – Jesus said “I am the truth”
- The Bible is God’s revelation of Himself and the truth we need to know to live a life that is right with God
- And if God is God (which He is), then being right with Him is the only thing that really matters in this life
- The problem is that we are living in a world that rejects God and resists the truth of His Word
- That makes living right before God harder
- Before we start this morning, would like you to think about something
- If you could ask God for just one thing to help you live right in this wrong way world, what would it be?
- Think about that as we go through this text this morning
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living Right with Humility!**
- In chapter 3 James talked to us about two things
- First, our tongue – how we talk reflects what we believe about God
- With our tongue we praise God – James says it is wrong to use that same tongue to speak evil things of people created in the image of God
- And then James told us what we need in order to say and do what is right in this wrong way world – godly wisdom
- And this morning he will tell us what happens when we don’t use godly wisdom to control our words and actions and also why we don’t do it

- **James 4:1**
- James just said in the previous section that peace is the fruit of godly wisdom at work in our lives.
- Earthly wisdom results in envy and selfish ambition.
- When envy and selfish ambition are at work, wars and fights are inevitable.
- This section is a description of what happens when there is a lack of godly wisdom.
- ‘wars and fights’ – conflict is inevitable if you are going to live right in a wrong way world
- James is addressing the conflict we engage in because we lack godly wisdom
- The problem is ‘your desires for pleasure’
- We have two natures – the flesh nature and the Spirit nature
- The Spirit seeks to please God and the flesh seeks to please itself
- That battle rages within every believer for their whole lives
- By faith the Spirit nature moves us to live a life that is pleasing to God
- When we allow the flesh to control our lives, our desire to please ourselves comes into conflict with the desires of other people’s flesh nature – the result is ‘wars and fights’
- If you fight with your spouse or children – it is a battle of selfish desires
- Not all conflict is wrong, but all conflict should be examined to discern which nature is active
- And because peace is the fruit of godly wisdom, conflicts with people in our life may point to conflict within ourselves with God.
- **James 4:2**
- This is the paradox of sin – it is the flesh crying out for more, but it is never enough
- In 1960, the movie Little Shop of Horrors, not the Rick Moranis version, included a flesh eating plant constantly said, ‘Feed me!’
- Once you start feeding your flesh sin, it will never be satisfied
- ‘do not have’ – what will satisfy you – ‘because you do not ask’ – God – you do not pray about it

- One of the greatest problems of our prayer life is that we do not pray!
- But even when we do, we do it wrong

- **James 4:3**

- Our pleasure is not an acceptable motive for prayer
- My dream car is a silver 1963 split-window, stingray Corvette
- I don't ask God to give me one
- If I had one, it would be solely for my pleasure
- Some might say, if you don't ask for it, you won't get it
- Really? My God knows my heart **Psalm 84:11**

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

- If you are asking for the wrong thing, God won't give it to you
- When our praying is wrong, our whole Christian life is wrong
- James then uses some very strong language

- **James 4:4**

- Friendship with the world is the equivalent of adultery against God **1 John 2:15-17**

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 lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- Chasing after the pleasures of this world, or the applause of this world, or the possessions we can acquire from this world is cheating on God.

- **James 4:5**

- God is jealous for our affection **Exodus 20:5**

... I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God...

- As a husband I am jealous for my wife's affections.
- I will oppose anything or anyone that threatens her affection toward me.

- I couldn't say that I loved her if I didn't **David Platt**

"This is not an insecure jealousy that is afraid you're going to find someone or something better, for there isn't anyone or anything better. This is a secure jealousy that seeks what is best for you by guarding your heart from adulterous pursuits."

- **James 4:6a**

- We don't need more of what the world offers, we need more grace

- Grace = the unmerited favor of God **R. Kent Hughes**
God's gracious supply to live as we ought in a fallen world.
- God gives us what we need, when we need it, so that we can live in this messed up world
- God's grace is given to overcome our personal weaknesses
- God has an endless supply of more grace
- But, there is a condition to getting more grace
- **James 4:6b**
- The problem with the people described in verses 1 to 5 was pride
- Selfish desires are a sign of pride – God resists the proud
- 'but gives grace to the humble' – the key to getting more grace is humility
- If I take this bottle of water and pour it out, which way will the water flow? Down, right? Why? Gravity
- God's grace is like a river, it flows down, it seeks the lowest point possible – it seeks the humble
- James in the next few verses gives us several keys to humility
- We only have time to touch on them, though each of them deserves a study of its own
- **James 4:7**
- First – 'submit to God' – to grow in humility, we must be willing to yield our will to God's – call Jesus Lord and mean it
- Second – 'Resist the devil...'
- Because of the Holy Spirit within us, we have the power in the name of Christ to put Satan and his armies to flight **Ephesians 6:10-12**
Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- Paul goes on in that text to describe the armor
- Submit to God, resist the devil – next three
- **James 4:8**
- Third – 'Draw near to God...' this is a call to believing prayer, faith-filled worship, diligent Bible reading and study, and service
- No matter how far we might feel from God, He is always right there

- If you make any effort to draw near to Him, which you can only do with the grace He has already given you, He will draw near and give you more grace
- Fourth – ‘cleanse your hands...’ – stop sinning, stop acting out your selfish desires
- Fifth – ‘purify your hearts’ – this is dealing with the inner person
- ‘double-minded’ – dual allegiance – to God and to the world
- **James 4:9**
- Sixth - This is a call to true repentance – not just being bothered because you got caught
- But broken because you sinned against the God who loves you
- The seventh and last one
- **James 4:10**
- James through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit exhorts us to ‘humble yourselves’
- Not going to ask for a show of hands, when I asked you to think about what you would ask God for so that you could live right in this wrong way world – how many said humility
- Humility is the pathway to more grace
- Some might pray, God, please humble me!’
- The verb ‘humble’ in this verse is in the imperative – it is a command
- If you ask God to humble you = ‘God, I am unwilling to obey your command to humble myself, you need to send some pain and suffering into my life, to break me and make me humble’
- Better to ask God for the grace you need to obey Him and humble yourself
- There are some preachers who seek to make their congregations feel good about themselves.
- That is not his job!
- His job is to help his flock to humble themselves before God and bring them to a place of brokenness over their sins against a holy God.
- His job is to bring them humbly before God so that God can make them feel good about Him and their relationship to Him.

- When we have a right attitude about our sin and humble ourselves before God, He will lift us up.
- That is good because He is the only who can lift us up and keep us lifted up **1 Peter 5:6-7**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- You can't do it for yourself and no one else can do it either – not your spouse, children, parents, pastor, church, job – only God!
- To live right in this wrong way world, we need to humble ourselves
- Not before this world but before God
- The more we humble ourselves before God, the bolder we can live in this wrong way world
- The humility that James is calling us to is not some pathetic, weak, surrender to the world and its ways
- When we humble ourselves before God, He gives us more grace to stand courageously against the evils of our day
- He gives us more grace to confidently speak the truth in love to those who are held captive to the lies of the Devil
- He gives us more grace to sacrificially love others, including those who hate us
- A Christian man or woman who has humbled themselves before God is a powerful tool or weapon in the hand of Almighty God to accomplish His will in this wrong way world
- If you want more grace – humble yourself before God
- If you want your life to matter more – humble yourself before God
- Let's pray and ask God to give us the grace we need to humble ourselves
- **Pray**