

# JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

## INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 4:1-12

1. IN JAMES 4:1-12, JAMES SAYS THAT THERE ARE **THREE "WARS"** GOING ON IN **OUR (THE BELIEVER'S) WORLD...** AND, HE EXPLAINED **HOW** THESE **"WARS"** COULD BE **STOPPED**.

A. **THREE "WARS"**:

1. WE ARE AT **WAR WITH EACH OTHER** (4:1a, 11-12).
2. WE ARE AT **WAR WITH OURSELVES** (4:1b-3).
3. WE ARE AT **WAR WITH GOD** (4:4-10).

B. **"WAR"** IN JAMES CHAPTER 4, REFERS TO THE **INTENSE INTERNAL STRUGGLES CAUSED BY A BELIEVER'S SELFISH UNGODLY DESIRES THAT ARE AT ODDS WITH GOD'S WILL**.

1. THESE **INNER CONFLICTS MANIFEST AS EXTERNAL "FIGHTS AND QUARRELS"** OFTEN WITHIN THE **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**.
2. THEY **STEM FROM SELFISHNESS, COVETOUSNESS, AND A DESIRE FOR PERSONAL PLEASURE RATHER THAN GOD'S PURPOSES**.

C. HERE'S AN **OUTLINE OF WHAT JAMES MEANS**:

1. **THE INTERNAL CONFLICT**:

a. THE **PRIMARY "WAR"** IS THE **BATTLE WITHIN BELIEVER'S MIND**, WHERE THEIR **SELFISH "PASSIONS"** (**STRONG DESIRES FOR GRATIFICATION**) ARE IN **CONFLICT WITH GOD'S WILL AND/OR IN CONFLICT WITH OTHERS**.

1) **2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NASB)** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

2) **Romans 12:2-3 (NASB)**

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

2. **THE SOURCE OF CONFLICT**:

a. THIS **INTERNAL BATTLE** IS THE **ROOT CAUSE OF EXTERNAL DISPUTES**, SUCH AS **BITTER ARGUMENTS AND FIGHTS** OFTEN **BETWEEN BELIEVERS**.

## JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

### INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 4:1-12

#### 3. THE MANIFESTATION OF SIN:

- a. WHEN THESE SELFISH DESIRES ARE UNFULFILLED, THEY LEAD TO FURTHER SINFUL ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS, WHICH JAMES ILLUSTRATES WITH STRONG LANGUAGE LIKE "KILL" (REFERRING TO THE INNER SPIRIT OF MURDER), "FIGHT," AND "WAR"... TO EMPHASIZE THEIR SERIOUSNESS.

#### 4. WORLDLY INFLUENCES:

- a. THESE SELFISH DESIRES ARE OFTEN ROOTED IN A DESIRE TO BE "FRIENDS WITH THE WORLD" RATHER THAN FRIENDS WITH GOD, WHICH LEADS TO SPIRITUAL ADULTERY AND HOSTILITY AGAINST GOD.

#### 5. A CALL TO REPENTANCE:

- a. JAMES URGES BELIEVERS TO:

- 1) RECOGNIZE THIS INNER WAR,

- 2) HUMBLE THEMSELVES BEFORE GOD,

- i. REPENT, CONFESS, ASK GOD TO FORGIVE THEM FOR OUR SINS...

- 3) AND SUBMIT TO HIS WILL...

- b. ... IN ORDER TO FIND TRUE SATISFACTION AND PEACE RATHER THAN CHASING FLEETING PLEASURES THAT LEAD TO CONFLICT AND DISSATISFACTION, AND ALWAYS THE DESIRE FOR MORE.