

Scripture: James 4 vs 1 to 6

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Subject: Wisdom for Godly Living Part 4

In the previous three Bible Studies we have considered from the Epistle of James, the issues that have been covered to assist us in our Wisdom for Godly Living have been the man behind the letter, the reason why he wrote it and that trials are not easy, necessary and that they refine us. We have also considered faith and works and active, and inactive faith. In the third study we observed the importance of a Godly tongue. In this final study we are going to be looking into what James says about areas of conflict

I trust that this Bible Study will further assist each of us to have more wisdom for Godly living, there are certain areas of concern that I will be covering in this study and trust that what I say will help each one to continue to grow in our Christian faith. Let's note the following.

1. The War Among the Saints.

It is quite clear from what James says in the opening verse that there is a problem among the Christians, and that James recognizes this; however, you notice he does not turn a blind eye to the problem but faces up to it. It is hard to believe that such a thing can exist in a Christian community, but it does.

By searching the scriptures, several verses confirm categorically problems that can occur amongst believers so we will note some of these as we proceed.

Before we look at these verses, I would like us to observe what Solomon says about the little foxes that spoil the vine. **Solomon 2 v 15** *Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.* Solomon is referring here to an enemy that can come within the garden of the Lord and spoil it, so we must take note of this and see how serious a problem the enemy within is.

The Christian church is the garden of the Lord, and each church group has to watch carefully that no little foxes spoil it.

Let's look now at some of the verses that make us aware of the conflict that can occur if we let it. There are various seeds that can settle amongst Christians. They are.

Seeds of Division

Seeds of Contention

Seeds of Jealousy

Seeds of Animosity

Romans 16 v 17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

1Cor 3 v 3 *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

1Cor 1 10 & 1

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

2Cor 12 v 20 *For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish: lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbiting, whisperings, conceits, tumults.*

Titus 3 v 9 *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*

One of the most serious breakdowns in the N.T. relationships was that of Paul and Barnabas. In Acts 15 at the end of that chapter we read of the separation of Paul and Barnabas, when each man

goes in a different direction. The dispute was very severe between them, which was because of John Mark. So even great Godly men at times succumbed to the strategy of the enemy to them break up. However, as we know this did not stop the Lord moving forward into other areas of Asia and Asia Minor.

Then in **Col 4 v 10** *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*

So it seems they were reconciled at some point, when I am not sure at all.

Churches have been split down the middle by infighting and disputing, ministers have had to move on from one congregation to another because of conflict in the leadership.

We have a responsibility having had this pointed out to us by James and others to make sure we are aware of the war that can take place amongst the saints and not allow such contentions, divisions, jealousy, and animosity to be found among us. Next, we will consider.

2. War on the Saints.

Jessie Penn-Lewis who was a very close friend of Evan Roberts the man God used in the Welsh Revival of 1904/5 wrote a book which she titled 'War on the Saints. It is an extensive study on this subject, she begins the book by giving 'A Biblical survey of Satanic deception'.

War on the saints is something that is not spoken of very often, and yet it is something that we should be made aware of. **Peter in his first Epistle chapter 5 v 8** says "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world".

The devils war on those who love the Lord has been going on for a very long time; his attack on men and women of God has been his primary aim and objective since creation. The first war on mankind was in the Garden of Eden, and since that time the devil has never altered his plans or strategy in his attempt to take control of God's creation, his aim has always been to master the whole of humanity.

I would like us to look at his war on certain O.T. Characters' and his war on the Lord Jesus in the N.T. In the O.T. his war was against individuals who walked close to the Lord.

3. The War on Joseph. His life story can be read in Genesis from chapter 30.

Let's consider Joseph who from the moment he shared with his brothers and father the dreams he had, which related to the plan and purpose of God in his life he came under attack. The devil used his brothers; he did it by dropping into each one a seed of jealousy, and destruction. The Lord then used one of his brothers to save him from the pit his other brothers threw him into.

This war on him did not stop there for when he secured a top job in the house Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, a captain of the guard, and an Egyptian, he came under attack in Potiphars house because Potiphars wife set her heart on him, but Joseph being a man of God who was full of the righteousness of God, and sought always to please the Lord refused her overtures, the result was that he became an offender, without offending, the devils war on Joseph resulted in him being put into prison for a crime he never committed. But though all this Joseph retained his close proximity to the Lord and through the Lord he was victorious, and given the high honor of leadership, the war on Joseph failed.

By living near the Lord however severe the devils war against you is, he cannot and will not be victorious. Then there is.

4. The War on Job. Read his history in the book of Job.

From the outset the devil set his heart upon Job, accusing the Lord of favoring him above others, even challenging the Lord to take all of Job's family and possessions from him. The devil went to war against him, and as result Job suffered physically far more than anyone could imagine.

The devil took away his family, his wealth, his servants, but not his wife or his life. This war on Job was to get him to defect, to turn his allegiance from serving the Lord to serving him. That is his strategy all the time in his war on the saints; he wants us to defect to dessert the Lord, to change our allegiance. But throughout this attack on his family and body Job stayed near the Lord and never sinned, never gave the devil a foothold in his life whatsoever. These are our examples; these are the men who show us how to live a victorious life. However, the war did not stop with them even though the devil was defeated, for we see in the N.T.

5. The War on Jesus.

From Matthew chapter 2 we can begin to read about the first strategic plan of the devil to destroy Jesus but this failed, then in Luke 4 we read of his attack on Jesus after the Lord had fasted for forty days. The devil tempted Him, but this again failed.

His final assault on Jesus was when he entered the heart of Judas who then betrayed Jesus, and this led to His crucifixion, at this point the devil thought he had achieved his objective, but death could not keep its pray, for he tore the bars away and up from the grave he arose. Although he defeated man in the Garden of Eden, he was himself defeated at Calvary, for at the cross the devil lost his mortal power, it was swallowed up in the victory of Christ. Christ delivered the fatal blow on the devil at Calvary.

Paul penned these amazing words to the Colossians when he wrote in chapter 2 vs 14 & 15

14 Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Now even though this is the truth, the devil has not yet been destroyed, defeated yes, destroyed not yet.

There was also the war on the disciples, when talking to them Jesus turns to Peter and says 31
“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren”.

6. The War in the Saints.

James is here confirming something that Paul wrote about in his Roman Epistle. However much we don't like the thought that there is a war taking place in us, we do have to face up to the truth of what the word of God says, for by understanding what often happens in us we can then look to the word of God for the necessary assistance to help us fight against this war within.

The reality of this war in the saints is something that only becomes a fact after we become a Christian, for the devil does not need to war against us if we are already on his side, it is those who are on God's side who have a battle with the devil. At this point then let's consider.

James Statement. 1 *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*

2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

This is what James lays before us he asks the question and then answers it. So, it is quite clear that James understood that in Christian people there is a war and that, that war is within. I don't know if you have heard the phrase *Down in the dumps and feeling blue, fighting with the devil and I don't know what to do?* Then comes the answer, *Just call upon the Lord he will help you through.*

Then we have.

Paul's Statement. Romans 7 vs 14 to 21

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

It is clear to me that Paul had a problem, for he struggled with the war that waged within, and I believe this is the case in all Christians, for the things we know we should do we struggle with, and yet the things we know we should not do, we bias towards doing them.

This is something we all need to be aware of, it is not something to bury your head in the sand about, it a fact. However even though this being the case there is no reason for any Christian to live in defeat, because we can do as Paul says in verse 24 & 25 when he writes *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Then we have.

James Solution. vs 7 & 8

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.