

JAMES 4; December 12; Wars & Worldliness in the Church

ANALYSIS:

1. What is the source or cause of wars and fighting's in the church?

2. Why are some prayers never answered? _____
3. While God resisteth the proud, what does He give to the humble?

4. In drawing nigh to God, what is required of us relative to our hands _____, our hearts _____, our minds _____?
5. When we are planning future activities, what approach pleases God?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

James begins chapter 4 by addressing wars and worldliness in the church. He declares that conflict (“wars and fightings”) between brethren results from personal lusts or selfish desires (“bitter envying and strife” 3:14-16). Such selfish desires lead to “confusion and every evil work” (3:16). They also lead to unanswered prayer because the prayer asked for personal gratification or satisfaction.

In addressing worldliness, James says that “a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” This reminds us of what Jesus demands: “No man can serve two masters ... Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt 6:24). Being a friend of the world means we accept and adopt its goals and attitudes and forget that we must “use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor 7:31). We are worldly when governed by the desires of the flesh and the fashions and customs which refuse to acknowledge God's right to rule in every matter. The world's ways and objectives are fundamentally at variance with God and His revealed will for us His children. We must choose the friendship of God over that of the world. Pretending to serve God while being a friend of the world is to be a spiritual adulterer or adulteress.

Let us continually renounce all manifestations of worldliness: tensions (v 1), dissatisfaction (v 2a), prayerlessness (v 2b), prayer with selfish goals (v 3), disloyalty to the Lord (v 4a), actually taking sides with the world against the Lord Jesus (v 4b).

HELP:

1. From the lusts (envy, covetousness, desires to be above others [see 3:14-16]) in our members (v 1).
2. Because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts [for personal satisfaction] (v 3).
3. Grace (v 6).
4. Cleanse our hands, purify our hearts, be of a single mind (v 8).
5. We ought to say: “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (v 15).