

James 4

Last time we finished James chapter 3. And James dedicated that chapter to addressing the topic of who should be giving instruction and direction in the church. He's been dealing all along with the topic of speech, and so it is natural that he would spend some time talking about those who should be speaking the word to the body of Christ. And in the prior chapter he had just exhorted them to show their faith through works, and this is one way that they might think they could do that. And so he needed to correct that misconception. He wanted them to understand that it isn't for many to be masters, teachers in the church. That that's not a good way to justify your faith, because it involves a lot of speaking, and in many things we offend all. People are going to be offended, and condemn you, rather than justifying you. And so he said don't try to be a director of the body, if your tongue is unruly. That will lead to envy and strife.

But who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. Let those speak who God has given a gift of knowledge and wisdom, who will speak the word with meekness, being slow to speak and slow to wrath, as he directed them.

And if they do that, they will have peace. The fruit of righteousness will be sown in peace of them that make peace. That speak the pure word, that is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated.

Whereas when there are many in the church with unruly tongues, speaking of their own accord, instead of by the grace of God, there will be envy and strife. When they speak the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish, there is confusion and every evil work. They will glory, and lie against the truth. And so instead of their faith being justified, people will see them, see their strife and envying, and they'll condemn them, they won't justify their faith.

And so today James is going to continue to address that topic, of strife. He's going to continue to talk about other things that contribute to strife, and how they should be avoiding that.

Verse 1

James 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Before, he told them that the envy and strife doesn't come from the wisdom that is from above. It is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

So that's not where their wars and fightings come from. It doesn't come from above.

They might think that it does, they might try to say that, but it doesn't.

Remember what he said before, in chapter 1:

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own **lust**, and enticed.

15 Then when **lust** hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

He said that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. But they are tempted when they are drawn away of the lusts.

So where do their wars and fightings come from?

They don't come from above, but even hence, of their lusts that war in their members.

James said that they come from the lusts that war within your bodies, between the different members, the different parts of your bodies.

Your hand wants to do one thing, your feet want to do another, your head wants to do another, your other organs have their own drives.

So they fight among themselves.

And he said that war has broken out into the whole body of Christ. You've let your lusts take so much control of you that the wars between the members of your bodies have become a war between the members of the body of Christ.

It is those same drives that have lead to conflict within the church. Those same lusts.

That's where the wars and fightings come from, not from above. Not from the Spirit.

And the other apostles also spoke of those lusts that war in our bodies.

1 Peter 2:11 [Peter said:] Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly **lusts**, which **war** against the soul;

So these lusts war against the soul. They try to conquer your entire body, your whole being. So that you live after those lusts, after the flesh, instead of after your spirit, or the Spirit of God.

Paul also expounds on that same idea in Galatians chapter 5.

And he says a few things there that are similar to what James has been discussing in these passages.

Because the book of Galatians has a similar theme. It was written to the Galatians to rebuke them for having gotten caught up in religion. They were grasping onto some aspects of Judaism. And so Paul rushed off this sharp rebuke, to correct them of that.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

And so remember how James spoke before of the perfect law of liberty.

And Paul says that's what we're called to. We're called to liberty.

But that doesn't mean that we should just do whatever we want, that we should serve the flesh. Instead, it means that we should by love serve one another. That's what Jesus commanded us, "love one another."

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

That's the same thing James said in chapter 2. That this is the law they need to keep. Love their neighbor as themselves. If they do that, they'll fulfill the whole law, and they'll be following the word of Christ in the NT. But if they don't do that, they'll be breaking the whole law, and they won't be walking after the faith Christ either.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

But he said, well, if you're not going to love one another, then just be careful that you don't get swallowed up of one another.

If you bite one another, you're going to eat one another up.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the **lust** of the flesh.

So rather than following the flesh, using liberty as an occasion to the flesh, they should follow the Spirit, and then they won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh **lusteth** against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

And here again is that conflict, between the lusts of the flesh. They war against each other, they war against the soul, they war against the Spirit, and what it wants to do.

So you can't do everything that you want to do. On the one hand, the flesh wants to do one thing, and on the other hand the Spirit wants to do another. You can't do both. You have to pick one or the other. So he said walk after the Spirit, don't follow the flesh.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

And if they do that, if they are being led by the Spirit of God, then they aren't under the law.

No need for law. No need for religion.

You're following the Spirit of God directly. You're not walking after the flesh, which is what the law is for, so it doesn't apply to you. You are at liberty. At liberty to follow the Spirit, and love and serve one another.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

So these are the things that the flesh wants to do. And he's told them not to do them.

And he said that those that do those things won't inherit the kingdom of God. And we talked about that before. Those that are filthy won't receive an inheritance.

But they shouldn't be walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

But the fruit that the Spirit bears is only good. Everything that is good and perfect. And so there is no need for a law beside.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and **lusts**.

Paul expounded on this more in Romans, but he said that they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Your flesh is dead. So you are free to follow the Spirit, you're no longer under the law.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

It is no longer our flesh that we live in, that is giving us life. We've been born again, our life now comes from the Spirit of God.

So if we live in the Spirit, if he's filled us with it, then let's walk in it.

Not in the flesh. Not under the law.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

So he warns them against the same things that we talked about last time. James warned against envy and strife, and said glory not.

And so now James, like Paul did there, tells them to stop walking after the lusts of the flesh.

That is where all of those things come from that James talked about in chapter 3.

Like Paul tells the Galatians, they shouldn't be desirous of vain glory. They shouldn't want to be many masters, thinking that it is a religious work.

Instead they'll end up provoking one another, and envying one another. That's what following religion, following the law, walking in the flesh, that's what it does.

James said that's where all the wars and fightings among them come from. From their lusts that war in their members.

Paul also told Timothy that there would come a time when the people in the church would actually want to hear that kind of wisdom. This this is what they would seek. They wouldn't want to hear the word of God, instead they'd want to hear this fleshly wisdom, many masters speaking after their lusts:

2 Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

So he's commanding him to teach the pure doctrine of the word at all times. Even though there will be times when people will say it is out of season, and they don't want to hear it:

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own **lusts** shall they *heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

And so when there are many masters, sometimes that's exactly what the church wants. They heap to themselves teachers, after their own lusts. Because the word spoken by those teachers isn't the wisdom from above, it is earthly and sensual wisdom, that appeals to the lusts of those that hear them. They won't speak the truth, but fables. Jewish fables, religious tales.

And so they'll walk after their lusts, hear after their lusts, and teach after their lusts, that war in their members.

Paul said there would come a time when that is what the church would want.

And here James is telling the twelve tribes scattered abroad that that is what many of them have been doing, and that they need to stop. Instead they need to look for the wisdom from above, with meekness.

But now there are wars and fightings among them, from their lusts that war in their members.

Verse 2

James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

He said they lust, and have not.

Now, isn't that backwards? Isn't it really that they have not, and so they lust?

They're lusting because they don't have it, right? So shouldn't he say that they have not, and lust?

But that's not what James said. He said they lust, and have not.

Sure, they didn't have before they lusted, but they didn't have afterward, either.

James's point is that the lust didn't accomplish anything for them. They lusted, but they still have not. It didn't get them what they wanted. It didn't make it happen.

In other words, it is futile. It's vain.

Even after they've lusted, they still don't have it.

He says, "ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain."

So it isn't that they don't take action on their lust, to try to fulfill it. They do. He said that they even go so far as to kill.

But they kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain.

Again, that seems backwards.

But he's pointing out how futile it is to try to fulfill this lust.

They even kill, but they still desire to have, and cannot obtain.

It doesn't bring it to them. It doesn't bring them any closer to having it.

They still desire it, and they still can't obtain it.

Remember how he said that there are lusts that war in their own members?

You see, they can't obtain, they can't fulfill their lust, because they have different lusts that are fighting against each other.

And just when you think you are fulfilling one, another one grows stronger and overcomes it.

They can't really accomplish what they want, they can't really obtain, because they have different lusts that are contrary one to another. So that they cannot do the things that they would.

Following lusts is totally futile, it is impossible to fulfill them, it is impossible to do what you would.

There is no end to it. There is no settling the controversy. The fight just goes on.

And so as long as those lusts drive them, they will never have peace in the body of Christ, either.

He says they fight and war. "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."

He said they don't have what they want, not because they just don't want it bad enough, not because they don't try to obtain it, but because they don't ask for it.

They're going about it the wrong way. They don't need to lust for it. They don't need to fight and war and kill. That's not how it is obtained. They lust and have not. They kill, and cannot obtain.

But they have not, because they ask not.

All they need to do is ask, and they will receive it.

So here's a riddle: what is it that you can lust after, but you can't obtain it by desiring it, or even by killing for it, but that you just have to ask for?
What is he talking about?

Well, he's talked about asking for something once before, at the start of his epistle:

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him **ask** of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

So James has told them that if they asked God for wisdom, he would give it to them. And he's just been talking more about that, about the wisdom from above, and how the wise man must be endued with knowledge by God. And how that is the man that should be a master in the church.

But they wanted to be many masters, right? A lot of them desired that. James said envy and strife were coming of that. Wars and fightings are among them. They lust, and have not. But you can't just desire to be a teacher. If you want the wisdom from above, then you need to ask for it.

And James said if you ask of God, he gives it to all men liberally.

So if they don't have it, it is because they ask not. Instead they are lusting after it, and it can't be obtained that way. They fight and kill for it, but that's not how you get it.

Ye have not, because he ask not.

Verse 3

James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

So James amends that. He says, well, some of you have asked for it, and haven't received it. You haven't received it because you asked for the wrong reasons. You ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

And that's exactly what James said about asking for wisdom, isn't it? He said that you have to ask the right way or you won't receive it:

James 1:6 But let him **ask** in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

He told them to ask in faith. To ask it from a position of believing God, and seeking that wisdom that in their trials patience might have its perfect work.

You can't ask just because you think it would be great to have some wisdom, not for the purpose of faith, but just because it is to be desired to make one wise. Just to consume it upon your lusts.

Not asking in faith, but just asking as somebody who isn't committed to enduring through the temptations, but just wants to use God to try to get something that they want out of him.

Just to consume it upon their lusts.

They won't receive anything of the Lord, because they're asking amiss.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

You see, they are following their lusts. The lusts that war in their members. And so they are going to be unstable. Because they aren't walking in faith, after the Spirit of God. They aren't following just that one mind. Instead they are letting themselves be tossed about by the lusts of their flesh, all the different lusts pulling them in different directions.

They're double minded, one mind after the flesh, another after the Spirit. And they'll be unstable in all their ways.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

And so James then went on to tell them what to rejoice in. Not for the wise man to glory in his wisdom. Not to ask for wisdom just to consume it upon their lusts. But to rejoice in their patience and hope. To rejoice in the coming of Christ, that in him those of low degree are exalted, and the rich are made low. All are preserved only by the word.

And so James is still talking about the same subjects.

About asking God for wisdom, asking God to make you a master in the church, and seeking that, not so that you can edify others. Not so that you can by love serve one another. But just to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, because that is what the lusts of the flesh want you to do.

And James told them, if they do that, they'll have an unruly and untamable tongue, and they'll just have strife and envy, confusion and every evil work. They should glory not, and lie not against the truth. These wars and fightings don't come from wisdom from above, wisdom they've asked God for. They come from their lusts that war in their members. It is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Verse 4

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

James says that they can't obtain what they want that way, by following their lusts, by fighting and warring. And when they try to, he says they make friends with the world.

They make friends with the world to try to get what they want.

They won't ask God for the wisdom, they won't ask for the right reasons so that they can receive it.

So they go out and ask the world instead.

That's why he said their wisdom was earthly and sensual. It comes from the lusts of their flesh, and from their friends in the world, that they've made to try to obtain the gift of God.

They are making friends with the world, but between them and their brethren there are wars and fightings. And they kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain.

You say, "'kill' is an awfully strong word there isn't it? He must just be speaking figuratively." No, I'm afraid he's not. It probably hadn't gotten that far for most of the people that he was writing to, but that is where it leads.

Jesus said this to the religious leaders of his day, those that would be many masters:

John 8:41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

So they said we believe, we believe in God, he's our father. We believe there is one God. We're not children of adulterers and adulteresses. We're not friends of the world.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

He said, if you really believed that, if you really loved God, then you would believe in me and love me also. If you were really true children of God.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the **lusts** of your father ye will do. He was *a murderer* from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

So he told them straight out that they would do the lusts of their father the devil.

Which lead the devil to lies and murder. And so they would lie and kill.

And that's exactly what happened. They lied about him, and killed him.

Out of envy. Because he was a master, and they wanted what he had.

But they couldn't obtain it. They lusted, and had not. They killed, and yet still desired to have, and could not obtain.

They were following lusts. The lusts of their father the devil.

And so they killed those that they thought stood in their way, of having what they wanted. It didn't actually bring it to them, like James said.

But that is where it leads. Envy leads to murder. When somebody wants a position and wisdom that God has given another man, the best way to get it, is to kill him. That's what the devil would do. And so that is what the lusts they follow, and the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish, that they follow, will tell them to do.

They were indeed born of fornication, and adulterers and adulteresses themselves, making friends with the world to kill a master that they opposed.

And so that is indeed what has often happened in history. People have killed one another to try to take or maintain an office, to try to steal the gift of God for themselves.

And it doesn't work. It's futile. But they do try.

And James says that is the path that these Jews are on.

Their enemies are those that God has given a position of being a master in the church. Or who have obtained it one way or another.

And their friends are those in the world who would do the dirty work to help them get it for themselves instead.

Their friends are the world, but their enemies are their brethren.

James calls them adulterers and adulteresses.

They aren't being faithful to Christ and their brethren.

They're fighting with those within the family, and making love to those without.

They are like adulterers, going out on their wife, and then conspiring to kill her, so that they can marry the other person.

James says, don't you know whose enemy you are? You're not just an enemy of your brethren. But it is God that has endued some of them with wisdom, that you are envying and warring against. It is ultimately God that is your enemy. When you became a friend of the world, you also became an enemy of God.

The world is at enmity with God, and so if you're friendly with them, you must be, too.

Verse 5

James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

So it is the spirit that dwelleth in us, our own human spirit, that lusts to envy. Just like our flesh. Again, that's not from above, that's not of God.

And note what he is talking about here.

He's talking about envy. He's not talking about covetousness, he isn't talking about asking for material things, coveting material things. That's true, too. But what he's talking about is envy, envying your brethren, and asking for wisdom to be a master in the church.

The spirit that dwells in them lusts to envy:

Verse 6

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

So our spirit lusts, but God gives us grace.

A good gift comes from above. The evil lusts and envy come from our lusts that war in our members.

And so James quotes from Proverbs 3:34, saying "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

God doesn't give the proud gifts, they ask and receive not. But he gives grace unto the humble.

And so again, what is he talking about? Coveting possessions? God gives grace unto the content?

No, God gives grace unto the humble. Proud, vs humble. He's talking about envying, asking for wisdom and grace, asking for a gift of God, that you may consume it upon your lusts. Asking to be a master, so that you can fulfill your pride.

And God resists the proud. He doesn't answer their request. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

But he gives grace unto the humble, and upraideth not. Those that are willing to admit they are insufficient, and come humbly before him, asking for grace to help in time of need.

You see, Peter quotes the same verse, in 1 Peter chapter 5, and it is in that same context:

1 Peter 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

So he is writing to those older men, some of whom knew Christ, who have been in the faith for a long time. And he tells them:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: **for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.**

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

So he told them to submit to those who were elder, who were older and wiser, and to all be subject one to another.

Not seeking to be lords over God's heritage for filthy lucre's sake, but with humility being subject to one another. Not lifted up with pride, but with humility. For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble.

So Peter quoted this same verse in the context of submitting themselves to one another. And that is what James is talking about here.

So what is this grace, that God gives to the humble?

Well, James said ask for wisdom, right?

This grace is being endued with wisdom and knowledge.

And that is the way that the term grace is often used in the NT. It is talking about God giving someone a ministry like that.

Romans 1:5 [Paul said:] By whom we have *received* **grace** and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

So he said that had received grace and apostleship from God. They'd received a ministry of the word, of the gospel, for the obedience of faith among all nations.

That was God's grace, that they'd been given.

And so:

Ephesians 3:7 [He said:] Whereof I was made a minister, according to the **gift** of the **grace** of God **given** unto me by the effectual working of his power.

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this **grace given**, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

To Paul, who is less than the least of all saints was this grace given. So he is humble. God gave grace unto the humble. That he should preach among the Gentiles the riches of Christ. So he was endued with a knowledge of the gospel. And he said that that was the grace of God.

In Romans 12 he exhorted them all to be humble as well:

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the **grace given** unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

So he's exhorting them to be humble, through the grace given to him. From that position of being humble himself, and ministering by the grace of God. He tells each of them to think soberly, as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. So as James said, they need to justify their faith, but they shouldn't seek to do it through a work that God hasn't given them the grace to fulfill. They shouldn't do that by being many masters, by thinking that they're something when they are nothing. They'll be condemned instead. If they want to show their faith, then they need to do it according to the measure of faith. The one that God has given grace to, that he has endued with wisdom from above, that is the one who should be doing that ministry.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
6 Having then gifts differing according to the **grace** that is **given** to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;
8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

So they have different gifts according to the grace given to them. And so let them think soberly, and minister according the proportion of faith. James tells them here, don't be proud, and seek a grace that hasn't been given to you, just because you want to be better than everybody else. Instead be humble. And the humble receive the grace that God gives to them. He giveth more grace.

1 Peter 4:10 As every man hath *received* the **gift**, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold **grace** of God.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God **giveth**: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

So those that have received the gift, those that are humble, and have been given grace of God, let them minister it. Let them not glory, but minister as of the ability which God giveth. That God might be glorified.

That's what James is calling them to do here. Not follow their lust for power and prestige. But to be humble, and receive the grace of God. And minister it as they receive it. Not going beyond it, and asking for something more to consume upon their lusts. But asking in humbleness, as those that are reliant on his grace, and in need of his wisdom. And then they will receive. He giveth more grace. He resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble.

Verse 7

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Submit to God.

Submit to his will, to his grace, to his gift, to his calling, to his ministry, through his ministers. Whether it is you, or it is somebody else.

Submit to God.

Don't seek your own glory, and even join friendship with the world to fight against God, to fight and war and try to obtain something that God hasn't given you.

If you do that, you are resisting God, and he's going to resist you. And then you certainly aren't going to receive that which you desire.

But instead submit yourselves to God.

Accept that it is of God, that it is by grace, not something that you can fight and war to obtain.

Ask for his grace. And if you receive it, minister as of the ability which God giveth, for God's glory. And if you don't, submit to it anyhow, to whoever he has given grace to.

The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy. But submit yourselves to God. Walk after the Spirit of God, not after the flesh.

Follow the wisdom from above, not that which is earthly, sensual, and devilish.

Submit to God, but resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

So there's the third part of that trifecta. He told us that their wars and fightings come from their fleshly lusts that war in their members. So they were sensual.

He told us that they were friends of the world. That their wisdom was earthly.

And now he tells them that they need to resist the devil. Their wisdom is also devilish.

Not only had they made friends with the world, but with the devil, too.

After all, he said the friend of the world is the enemy of God. And the devil is an enemy of God.

So it is natural that they'd be working alongside him.

It is the world the flesh and devil that they have been submitting to, it is that wisdom that they've been following.

But now they need to resist the devil, leave off their friendship with the world, and walk by grace, and submit themselves unto God.

We just read from 1 Peter chapter 5, and here's what it says after he tells them to submit themselves unto he elders, and to one another:

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, **submit** yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the **devil**, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom **resist** stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

So as James does here, Peter went on to tell them to also resist the devil. In addition to submitting themselves to one another in the grace of God. To resist the devil, because he's always looking for some proud and unsuspecting person to devour.

But James says that all they have to do is resist him, and he will flee from them.

You see, they've not been resisting the devil. They've been following their lusts, and making friends with the world. And so when the devil came along and offered to help them get what they wanted, it looked like a good deal. They said yes.

They probably didn't realize what they were doing, they didn't know it was the devil making the offer, but that's what happened.

They've been doing the devil's bidding, because it has looked to them like it would help them get what they want.

But they need to recognize that, and stop it. They need to instead resist the devil. And he will flee from them.

And boy is that true.

I have not had a run-in with the devil in years.

Because I resisted him. I quoted this verse to him and told him to leave and never come back.

And he fled.

There's nothing else he can do. You resist him, and he will flee from you.

Many Christians forget that we have power over Satan through Christ. That we have power over the devils.

And instead of telling him that they're not subject to him, that they're not going to submit to him, that they don't have to, that they're free, because the Bible has declared our power in Christ, and that the devil is defeated, and that they resist him, and he must flee:—they just continue to let him keep tempting them.

But they should resist the devil, and he will flee from them.

There are many passages where Jesus rebukes the devils. And that is what you need to do. Resist him, and rebuke him, and he will flee from you.

And that is something that those which would be teachers in the church especially need to know. Because the devil is especially out to get them.

1 Timothy 3:1 [Paul said this:] This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

And that is what James is talking about here, desiring to be a master in the church.

Paul said that is a good work. And James anticipated that some people would want to do that as a means to show their faith.

But Paul goes on to say that if it is a good work, then it needs to be done well.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

So as James said here, this is a good work for those who are prepared to do it well. But they need to be meek, slow to wrath. They need to be blameless, because they will receive the greater condemnation.

- 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;
- 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
- 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with *pride* he fall into the condemnation of the **devil**.

So Paul said that if they were a novice, they'd be lifted up with pride, and the devil would get ahold of them, and they'd fall into condemnation.
As James said, they'll receive the greater condemnation.

- 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the **devil**.

And so the devil has set a snare for them. For those that would be bishops, shepherds and teachers of the church.
And so they need to be somebody who isn't given to pride, and not given to offending with their tongue. But meek and humble, speaking the word of God.
Paul goes on to say in the next chapter:

- 1 Timothy 4:1** Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of **devils**;
- 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
- 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

And so there are seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. And many people are going to give heed to them. Speaking lies in hypocrisy.
And so that is something that a teacher of God needs to carefully avoid.
The devil is out to get them, but what they need to do is submit themselves to God. To submit themselves to the grace of God, and accept what gift and calling he gives them, as they ask him humbly for wisdom.
Not trying to go it alone. Then the devil will get them, and they'll become a friend of the world, and an enemy of God.
But submitting themselves to God, and resisting the devil. And he will flee from them.

- 1 John 3:10** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the **devil**: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Remember, James has been talking about contention here, them fighting and warring with one another. It doesn't sound like some of them love their brethren.
That makes them children of the devil, according to John. That's what a child of the devil is known by.
If they have faith, they certainly haven't justified it.

- 11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

And so we talked about that last time, how Cain slew Abel because God accepted Abel's offering and didn't accept Cain's. Cain's evil work was a work that he did of his own heart to try to please God.

And of course it didn't please God, because it wasn't what God required. It was an evil work. And that is what these people are doing that are trying to be something, do a work of God, be a minister, out of the pride of their own heart and the lusts of their flesh. Not by submitting themselves to the grace of God.

And so like Cain, James says that they kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain. Like Cain, killing brings them no closer to getting what they want. But they fight and war.

What they need to do is submit to God, and resist the devil. Instead of following the devil and behaving like his children they need to submit to God, and let him give them more grace.

Verse 8

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

So he calls them double minded. That is the same thing that the called those that were wavering when they were asking God for wisdom, not asking in faith.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A **double minded** man is unstable in all his ways.

So the double minded man is unstable in all his ways, and he won't receive from God what he asked for. He won't be given that wisdom, so that patience might have its perfect work.

So James tells them to stop wavering, to stop being double minded, and to purify their hearts. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

To stop doing evil, and stop thinking evil, to stop sinning. To stop wavering, but to be sound in the faith. Not double minded, but with their whole heart serving God. Fully submitting themselves unto God, and resisting the devil.

He said, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

So just as the devil flees when you resist him, so God draws near to you when you submit to him, and draw near to him.

As he said before, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. When they draw nigh to him, he will draw nigh to them.

Hebrews 10:22 [Paul said:] Let us **draw near** with a true **heart** in full assurance of faith, having our **hearts** sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with **pure** water.

So Paul told the Hebrews to stop trusting in the law, in religious works, in themselves. But instead to trust in the grace of God. And by the grace of Christ, and his finished work, to draw nigh to the Father.

With a true heart. Not double minded. But in full assurance of faith.
Being cleansed with pure water.

And James tells them that when they do that, when they draw nigh unto God by his grace, and submit themselves to him, he will draw nigh unto them.

If they are not wavering, or double minded, but with clean hands and a pure heart. Not in pride and envy, but submitting themselves to the grace of God.

Verse 9

James 4:9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

So this is a serious thing. James tells them to weep over it. To weep over the fact that they have been fighting and warring after their fleshly lusts, making friends with the world and the devil, and becoming enemies of God, to try to exalt themselves. That they've been as adulterers and as adulteresses, walking in pride, and killing, and desiring to have, and being unable to obtain. Not asking, and asking and not receiving, because they ask amiss.

He said weep and mourn over it.

He said you're laughing, and have joy. But let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness.

He told them to rejoice before, but now he tells those that have been asking amiss that they need to stop rejoicing. They've been rejoicing in the wrong thing, and they need to stop, and mourn and weep instead.

They need to stop glorying in their earthly wisdom, and in heaviness and humbleness seek the wisdom from above.

Then they can rejoice, in that they are made low.

Verse 10

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

And then, once they've humbled themselves in the sight of the Lord, he will exalt them. And then they can rejoice in that they are exalted, as James said. But first they need to afflict and humble themselves, and seek the wisdom and grace of God. Submitting themselves to him, to his grace, and his calling, and his will, and not the lusts of their flesh and the will of the devil.

And then God will lift them up. He will give them that which they originally desired. When they ask in faith, nothing wavering, God giveth to all men liberally.

So if they ask right, they will receive. He giveth more grace, and he will lift them up.

Verse 11

James 4:11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

And one thing that comes from this fighting and warring is that they'll speak evil of their brethren.

Trying to get ahead of them, trying to exalt themselves above others. They'll speak evil of one another.

And he talked about their unruly tongues in the previous chapter.

But of course, this is the focus of his book, is their speech. So he says it again. Don't speak evil of one another.

And he gives a reason here.

And it isn't what we might expect.

In the book of John, John just says that we're supposed to love one another. We've read some verses where he said that.

But James takes a different approach.

Instead of telling them what they ought to do, that they ought to be loving one another, he instead focusses on the consequences of not doing that, the consequences of speaking evil of one another.

He points out what you are doing when you do that. Who you are making yourself.

And of course he's just been talking about not making yourselves many masters.

And basically what he says here is that that is what you do when you speak evil your brother.

You're making yourself a master over them, giving them instruction.

And actually, he takes it a little farther than that even.

He says, "He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law."

Not only have you made yourself a judge, not only have you given yourself the position of judging your brother, but you've done it out of your own mind, out of your own imagination, your own sense of right and wrong.

It isn't that your brother has transgressed God's law, the perfect law of liberty, in some way.

That's not your basis for your judgement. Not really.

It is your own pride, and envy, and the lusts of your flesh. Trying to score a victory in the wars and fightings that he just talked about.

So you've essentially just come up with your own law. You decided that the law of God wasn't good enough, because it didn't condemn your brother. So you came up with your own rules just so you could say something evil about him.

You haven't just judged your brother, you've spoken evil of the law, and judged the law.

You've judged the law itself, and despised it, said that wasn't going to be your basis for giving judgment, you've got a better one that you've come up with.

So now you're not only judging your brother, you're also judging between different laws. God's law and your law. And you said that God's was evil, and yours was better.

"but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."

James said wow, at that point, you're no longer under the law, you get to decide what it is. You've essentially just made yourself a god, who has a perfect sense of righteousness, and can ordain a law for others to follow. But that's kind of stepping on God's toes, isn't it?

Verse 12

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

There is already one God, who gave the law. He's able to save and to destroy, to destroy those who are condemned and worthy of destruction by his law.

So who are you? Who are you to fight and war and kill? Who are you to judge and destroy? Some new god who came newly up? Who art thou that judgest another?

James was certainly right to call that pride, above. To say that you were actually at enmity with God when you were fighting your brothers.

I mean, you're trying to take God's place.

All because you are speaking evil of your brother, and judging your brother. By your own fleshly, earthly wisdom.

So speak not evil one of another, brethren. There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Submit yourselves to him.

Now, this doesn't mean that you never rebuke somebody who has sinned.

But it means you don't speak evil of your brother.

You don't be many masters, and judges of evil thoughts, who judge the law, and speak their own wisdom.

But as James said in chapter 3:

James 3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

In meekness, submitted unto God and his law of liberty.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

Not out of envy and strife, not in wars and fightings that come from your lusts that war in your members.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

But wisdom that makes peace. Wisdom that rebukes from the word of God, but is gentle, easy to be intreated, and full of mercy. Making peace. Speaking the word in meekness.

So that is James's message about unrest and conflict in the body of Christ. He says there is too many masters, too many people who haven't been endued with wisdom and knowledge from God, too many who aren't speaking the wisdom from above.

And you know, this isn't a message that I would ever think to speak on. To discourage people from being teachers in the church.

Maybe if I was a little older and wiser like James, I would see the need for it. But it isn't something that I would have thought to teach on on my own.

But it is a message that God wanted to convey to us, and inspired James to write here.

And now that we've studied though it, I can see the wisdom in it. I can see why it is needed.

I think it is a message that the church often needs to hear. I think that the church needs to hear it today. There are too many people who aren't speaking from the grace of God, but have become ministers just like they would go into any other occupation: because it is what you want to be. Just following their lusts.

And it leads to wars and fightings within the church. Too many people lifted up with pride who want to be on top. And who fall into the condemnation of the devil.

And it is something that so permeates the church today that it is almost unavoidable. Even those who truly are called of God to teach often get caught up in it.

And James really doesn't offer us a solution that we can implement, to stop that. He doesn't tell us to go out and change it. He said speak not evil of your brother.

It is really up to those that are seeking to be teachers, but haven't received wisdom from God, to glory not. It is up to them to stop rejoicing, and to mourn and weep.

And those that follow them should be more discerning as well. Don't follow those that are just fighting and warring. That are speaking evil of their brethren, and are friends of the world, and aren't resisting the devil. Don't exalt them in the church.

But ultimately it is they that need to resist the devil, and repent, and mourn.

And James doesn't charge us with going out and rebuking them here. He rebukes them, and leaves it up to them to respond properly.

Today in the church we follow too much what the world does. We call people out by name, and rebuke and shame them from a distance.

And that isn't what the Bible tells us to do.

Jesus said to tell them their fault between thee and him alone. And if he will hear thee, thou has gained thy brother.

And if he wouldn't hear you then he said to take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And then, if he refuses to hear them as well, then you tell it to the church. And if he still refuses to hear when the church as a whole rebukes, then you can treat him as a heathen instead of a brother.

But today people usually jump straight to the part about telling it to the church and treating him as a heathen and a publican.

There is a tendency to call somebody out as a heretic, without ever having sought to admonish them directly and show them their fault.

And that is wrong. That is what James is talking about here when he says speak not evil one of another.

That's not how you are supposed to go about rebuking a brother in Christ.

That's what somebody does who is not resisting the devil, and making friends with the world, and trying to promote themselves and down their brethren out of envy, to fulfill their lusts.

That's what James is rebuking here. That wisdom descendeth not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. Not those that initiate strife, and wars and fightings, by speaking evil of their brethren. You're speaking evil of the law, and judging the law, instead of following scripture's instruction on how you ought to go about correcting a brother.