

JAMES 4

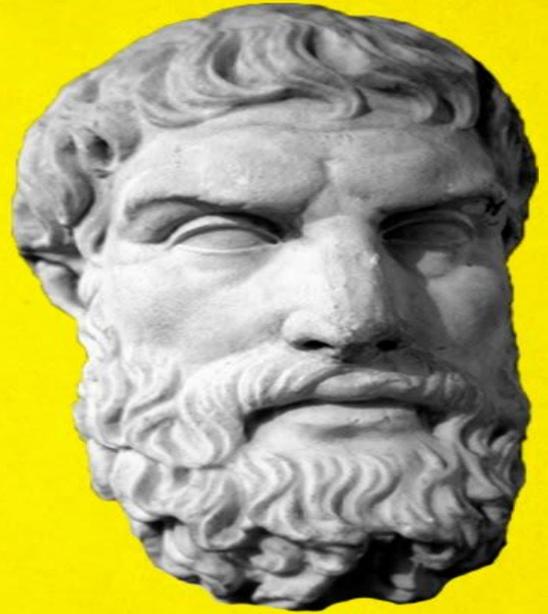
A STUDY THROUGH THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Civil War

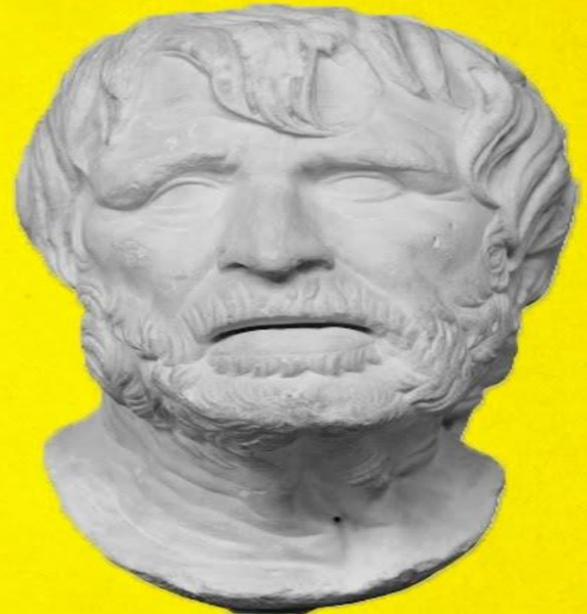
James 4:1-3

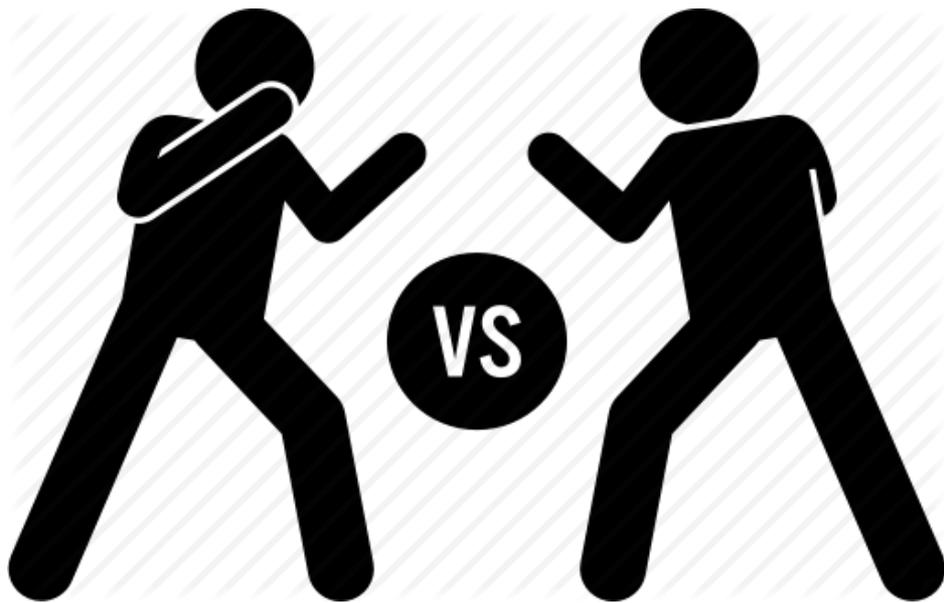


EPICURUS



THE STOICS





“Consider the continual war which prevails among men even in times of peace, and which exists not only between nations and countries and cities, but also between private houses, or, I might rather say, is present with every individual man; observe the unspeakable raging storm in men’s souls that is excited by the violent rush of the affairs of life; and you may well wonder whether anyone can enjoy tranquility in such a storm, and maintain calm amid the surge of this billowing sea.”

• **Philo, Jewish Philosopher**

James 4:1-3

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? **2** You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

James 4:1

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

“Quarrels and Conflicts”

- “Quarrels”
 - πόλεμος (*polemos*)
 - “armed conflict, war”
 - **KJV: war; NET: conflicts**
 - Used to describe literal war
- “Conflicts”
 - μάχη (*machē*)
 - “a fight, combat”
 - **KJV: fightings; NET: quarrels**
 - Used to describe personal conflicts

In 3:18, James Called For:

“righteousness...sown in peace by those who make peace.”

Instead, his flock was manifesting just the opposite: war and strife.

What is James' approach to deal with this unacceptable behavior?

He Could:

- Attack faulty reasoning.
- Address misunderstandings.
- Talk doctrine.
- Explain God's connection to His people.
- Dig into the nature of faith.

But Instead...

“Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?”



In Other Words:

“You Know Exactly Why This Is
Happening!”

James already addressed anger back in
1:20.

If faith is active and brings discipline to
speech, their lives would not be
characterized by “quarrels and conflicts.”

If You Are “At War” With Someone

It's your fault.

Specifically, you are being
driven by your pursuit of
pleasure and satisfaction.



James Gets Confrontational

He wants to get to the root of the problem:

“pleasures”

ἡδονή (hēdonē)

- Luke 8:14 –

“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and *pleasures* of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”

FLESH

VS

SPIRIT

John 6:63

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

Galatians 5:17

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”

Turn to
Romans 7:14-20

The Human Will

When not in willful
submission to the
Word of God is
“demonic.”

What Do
We Do?

Know Thyself

1. **Honesty and Confession of sin is necessary**
2. **Evil desire is a reality within us all**
3. **It must be confronted**
4. **This confrontation is even more difficult within the body of Christ**
5. **The struggle must be undertaken daily**
6. **If we do not keep these desires in check, they will result in pain and conflict**

Romans 8:13

“for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

James 4:2a

2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.

James Digs Deeper

- What is the nature of evil desires?
 1. You want what you do not have.
 - The result: “you commit murder”
 2. You covet what you cannot obtain.
 - The result: “you fight and quarrel”

This is NOT Benign or Harmless

Since passion is unbridled,
James says, murder is
committed.

**OK, but this isn't literal murder,
right?**

Right?!?!?!?

“Murder” φονεύω (*phoneuō*)

- In 2:11, James quoted from the Ten Commandments: “Do not commit murder” using this exact word.
- Jesus does the same in Matthew 19:18.
- Paul does the same in Romans 13:9.

Did God mean literal murder in the original context?

I Think James Does, As Well

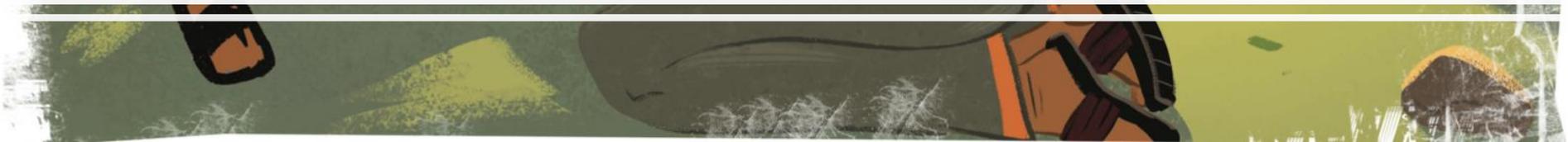
Within this epistle, James has been very clear about the death-dealing effects of partiality to the rich and neglect of the poor.

There is a ruthlessness in the hearts of those who are bent on fulfilling their desires.

Perhaps, James has a particular parable in mind.



Matthew 18:21-35



James Uses Strong Language For a Reason.

While I doubt the church is committing murder en masse, their fighting, double-mindedness, and preferential treatment may be condemning people to death.

Making a Murderer

1. We allow ourselves to desire something.
2. That thing begins to dominate our thoughts; we find ourselves involuntarily thinking about it in our waking hours and dreaming of it when we sleep.
3. We begin to form imaginary schemes to obtain it; and these plans may well involve ways of eliminating those who stand in our way.
4. For some time, all this may go on in the mind. Then one day the imaginings may blaze into action; and we may find ourselves taking the terrible steps necessary to obtain our desire.

The FBI Reports:

In 2011, in incidents of murder for which the relationships of murder victims and offenders were known, 54.3 percent were killed by someone they knew (acquaintance, neighbor, friend, boyfriend, etc.); 24.8 percent of victims were slain by family members.

John 8:44

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Next Up: Covetousness

- Whereas envy is willing to destroy in order to gain what belongs to another, coveting is willing to steal what is not yours.
- This is idolatry, and it turns something earthly into an object of ultimate desire.

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James 4:2b-3

2b You do not have because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

James, What Do We Do?

“You do not have
because you do
not ask.”

The Answer: Prayer

Prayer that is consistent with true faith does not make selfish requests.

But so often, we allow our own selfish desires to affect our prayer life.

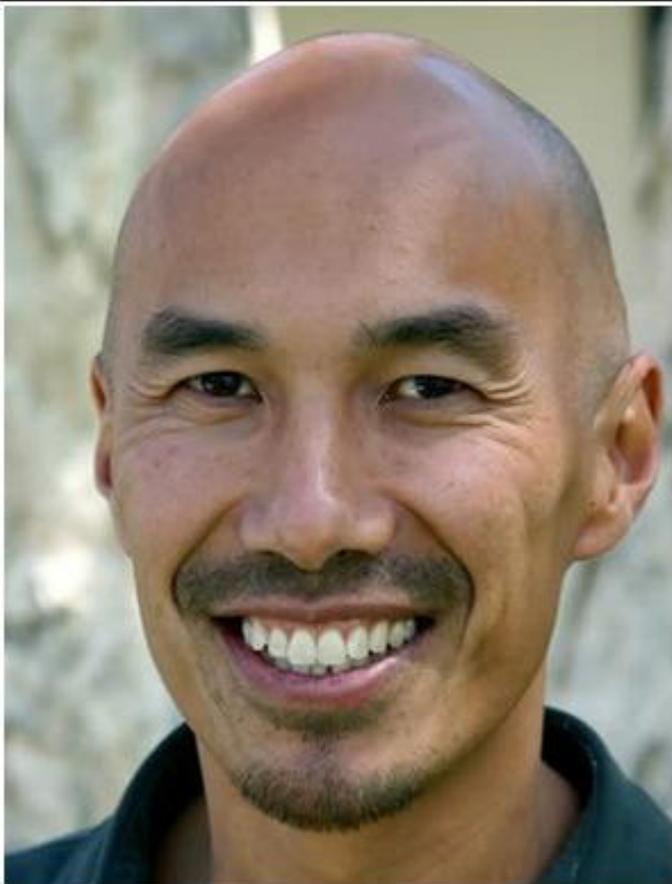
James Told Us in 1:17

“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above”

And yet we will not ask!

From 1:5, we know God “gives [wisdom] to all generously and without reproach”

And yet we will not ask!



The irony is that while God doesn't need us but still wants us, we desperately need God but don't really want Him most of the time.

— *Francis Chan* —

AZ QUOTES

But Some Might Say:

I Do Ask!

All The Time!

We Are Commanded to “Ask”

- Philippians 4:6 –

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

However, the question is:

What is driving you to ask of God?

Believers Who Ask Selfishly

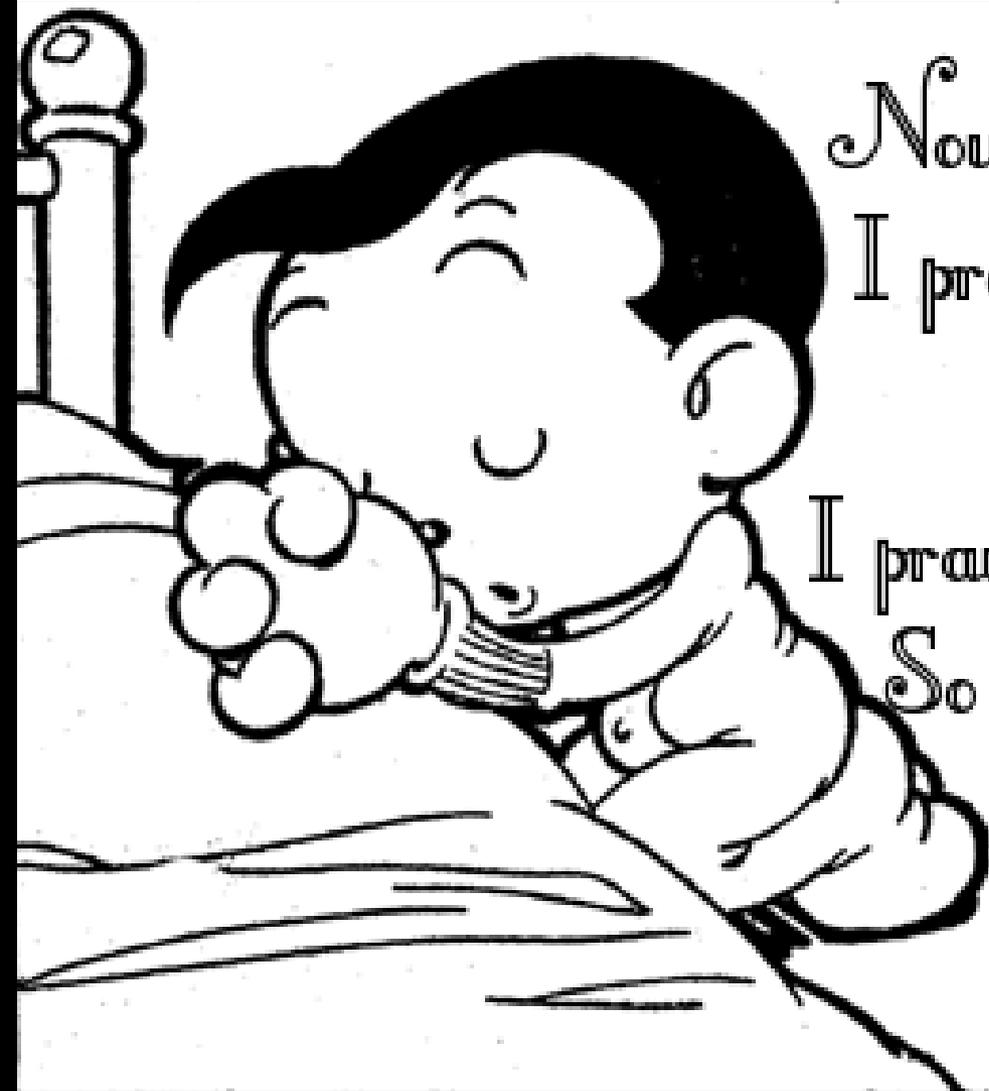
- Are driven by two things:

1. Self-sufficiency

- We do not really trust in God's provision

2. Shame

- We are too proud to correct our sinful attitude



Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the lord my toys to keep
If I die before I wake
I pray the lord my toys to break
So no other kid can use them

Amen

By - Shel Silverstein

Instead of Asking God

We become so insistent with one another that our own wisdom is correct that we often quarrel and fight.

A body of Christ committed to the mind of Christ will be unified in bringing glory to Christ.

And We Ask “with wrong motives”

- Our requests are selfish and envious, “so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”
- God does not answer our selfish prayers not only because they are evil but also because we would just spend His generosity on ourselves.

James Would Say To Us:

- Rather than becoming frustrated through the attempt to gain things on our own, we should ask God in prayer for what we need.
- If we still do not find ourselves receiving what we ask for, then we should check our motives: perhaps our prayers are oriented too much around our own selfish pleasures and not enough around the will of God and the needs of others.

How We
Treat
God

This Is
Pagan.





I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church.

- Charles Spurgeon

The Facts

The craving for pleasure in the end
shuts the door of prayer

The true end of prayer is to say to
God: 'Your will be done.'

And the selfish man can never
submit to that truth.

