WORLDLINESS

JAMES 4:1-10
9-13-2020

WE NEED TO CONFRONT THE WORLDLINESS THAT IS IN OUR LIVES!

3 Facts about worldliness:

I. SELFISH PLEASURE IS THE CAUSE OF WORLDLINESS (V. 1-3)
(Answers the question, Where does worldliness come from?)
2 Evidences of selfish pleasure:

A. CONFLICT (V. 1-2)
1. Internal conflict (with yourself)
2. External conflict (with others)

B. UNANSWERED PRAYER (V. 2b - 3)
1. Because of Prayerlessness (absence of prayer) (v. 2b)
2. Because of Selfishness (wrong motives in prayer) (v. 3)

II. SPIRITUAL ADULTERY IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF WORLDLINESS (V. 4-5)
(Answers the question, What is the result of worldliness?)
3 results of spiritual adultery:

A. YOU MAKE YOURSELF GOD'S ENEMY (V. 4)

B. YOU GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (V. 5)

C. YOU FORFEIT GOD'S BLESSINGS (V. 6)

III. SUBMISSIVE REPENTANCE IS THE CURE FOR WORLDLINESS (V. 7-10)
(Answers the question, What is the remedy for worldliness?)
2 Steps toward submissive repentance:

A. YOU MUST HUMBLY SEEK GOD (V. 7-8a)
1. Submit under God's authority (v. 7a)
2. Resist (take a stand against) Satan (v. 7b)
3. Draw near to God (v. 8a)

B. YOU MUST TOTALLY FORSAKE SIN (V. 8b-9)
1. You need a thorough cleansing from sin (v. 8b)
2. You need a genuine sorrow for sin (v. 9)

Conclusion: VERSE 10

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1. You need a _____ from sin (v. 8b)
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Conclusion: VERSE 10

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INTRO:

WE NEED TO CONFRONT THE WORLDLINESS THAT IS IN OUR LIVES!

3 Facts about Worldliness:

I. <u>SELFISH PLEASURE</u> IS THE <u>CAUSE</u> OF WORLDLINESS (v. 1-3)

<u>Two Evidences</u> of selfish pleasure:

A. <u>CONFLICT</u> (v. 1-2)

1. Internal Conflict (with yourself)

"Among you" = <u>in</u> ( ) you)personally)

I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

It is <u>inner</u> conflicts (feelings of tension and frustration) that cause <u>outer</u> conflicts.

"In your members" = inside your body parts

These conflicts come from a self-centered, pleasure-seeking <u>old Nature</u> (Rom. 7:14-25; 8:6-7).

"Lusts" = pleasures; we get our English word "hedonism" from Greek. Hedonism is the doctrine that pleasure is the "sole or chief good in life."

Cp. "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" - II Tim. 3:4

"That war" - describes a constant military campaign. These pleasures are described as alien soldiers that demand gratification and scheme as to how to get it. Our selfish pleasures like soldiers scheme and make plans to enter into conflict with anyone else who thwarts (stops) the fulfillment of those desires.

APPLI: Do you know why you are mad and defensive when someone points out sin in your life? It is because you are letting your fleshly appetites say: "No! Stop this person from keeping from us what we want!"

2. External Conflict (with others)

If there is war on the inside there will be war on the outside.

People who live for self-pleasure are constantly grasping after an eluding goal. Such failure disappoints and frustrates the person, who, unless he repents, will take his frustrations out on others.

NOTE: Punctuation is not inspired. James is saying because you lust
( ) and don't receive what you want, you strike out at others.
(CP. anger is just as guilt-worthy as murder - Mt. 5:21-22)

Ex. - In an outburst of rage, some people say, "I'm so mad, I could kill him!"
"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (I John 3:15).

James is saying: You are zealous with jealousy ( ) to have something but do not have the power (ability) to obtain it, so you get into skirmishes (fights--whether verbal or physical) and into long, drawn-out wars.

If you're not worldly, then where are your conflicts with others coming from?

``disunity in our homes and in the Body of Christ are manifestations.

Selfishness drives people apart.

"Thou shalt not covet" is the last of God's ten commandments, but its violation can make us break all of the other

nine! Covetousness can make a person murder, tell lies, dishonor his parents, commit adultery, etc. (Wiersbe, p. 121).

ILLUS: Of sinful nature of a child who does not get his own way.

Are you living to please yourself? Or are you living to please God? If you are living to please yourself--you are worldly! Let God be the one who satisfied you, who gives you pleasure in His way.

B. UNANSWERED PRAYER (v. 2b-3)

1. Because of prayerlessness (absence of prayer) (v. 2b)

You can measure your worldliness by how little you pray.

Because you are worldly, instead of turning to God (the Giver of every good and perfect gift) you attempt to satisfy your selfish wants through your own efforts. This is exactly the way the world does!

You need to wrestle (like Jacob) with God in prayer and not quit and forsake God, going out to satisfy your needs your own way.

Do you know why you don't ask God! Because you know that what you want is not His will for you.

2. Because of selfishness (wrong motives in prayer) (v. 3)

God does not answer every prayer; you must meet his conditions (cp. Ja. 1:6).

"Amiss" = = evil, bad

It is possible to ask for good things for a bad reason.

If you only ask for things to spend it on your selfish pleasures (like prodigal son - Lk. 15:14), you are worldly.

II. SPIRITUAL ADULTERY IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF WORLDLINESS

(v. 4-6)
(Answers the question, What is the result of worldliness?)

Israel was viewed as married to God (Isaiah 54:5 - "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy one of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.")

The Church today is pictured as the Bride and Christ is the groom (Eph. 5:22-32)

And you belong to God! ("You are not your own . . ." I Cor. 6:19-20).

A believer selfishly living for what he wants is a spiritual adulterer. EX: When we stop looking for satisfaction in our wife and get satisfaction in someone else's wife, this is adultery!

"Friendship" = affectionate love; also means to kiss.

"World" = not physical creation; but world system.

If we are going to build friendships with the unsaved, we will have to do it on their terms--because our terms are "spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:15) and they are spiritually blind to them.

It breaks God's heart to see His children commit spiritual adultery.

"Enmity" = the opposite of friendship

You have an attitude of personal hostility toward God (objective genitive).

You cannot embrace both God and the world. "You cannot serve two masters" - Mt. 6:24.

Your friendship with the world shows:

1. That you do <u>not</u> <u>love God</u>
   "Love not the world . . .the love of the Father is not in Him . . ." (I Jn. 2:15).

2. That you are <u>unfaithful</u> to the Savior you claim is your Lord.

3. That you are <u>in agreement</u> with the world's philosophy, practices and goals.

We are "in the world but not of it" (Jn. 17:15)

ILLUS: of a ship sailing in the ocean. "The ship must navigate in the water, but the passengers, crew, cargo, and engines are kept separate from the water. If the ocean gets into the ship, it begins to sink. If the world seeps into the life of a Christian, he is headed for wreckage" (Colson, p. 68).

<u>3 Results</u> of spiritual adultery:

A. YOU MAKE YOURSELF GOD`S ENEMY (v. 4)

   "Maketh himself" - You make a <u>deliberate choice</u> to be a friend of the world (no one forced you). But in doing so <u>you</u> become God's enemy! This is why God is not blessing you! Do you expect to get from someone who is your enemy? Not any more than we should be giving arms, etc., to Russia.

B. YOU GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (v. 5)

   Exod. 20:5 - "I . . . am a jealous God."

The Holy Spirit "Lusteth" (yearns; greatly desires your affection) for you with jealousy against all others that would try to steal you away.

God (like a good spouse would be) is unwilling that you share your affections with the world.

God refuses to share you with another. The Holy Spirit, imparted to us by God at conversion, yearns enviously for our total loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ.

C. YOU FORFEIT GOD'S BLESSINGS (v. 6)

James is saying: God gives a greater grace than the pleasures that the world offers.

But if you will remain proud, God will not give it to you! The proud man says, "I don't need God's grace. I am self-sufficient; I am the standard of excellence; I feel sorry for those of you who need God's grace."

The humble, on the other hand, hold themselves out like empty vessels, saying to God, "Fill me. I want what you offer!"

III. SUBMISSIVE REPENTANCE IS THE CURE FOR WORLDLINESS (v. 7-10)
(Answers the question, What is the remedy for worldliness?)

2 Steps toward submissive repentance:

A. YOU MUST HUMBLY SEEK GOD (v. 7-8a)

God is calling out for you to return to him!

1. Submit under God's authority (v. 7a)

"Submit" = take your place under God's supreme will.

NOTE: God does not force submission. It is voluntary.

There was a time in your life (was there not?) when you with child-like faith submitted to God and obeyed Him right away. But now you think you are smart and can rationalize your way out.

2. Resist (take a stand against) Satan (v. 7b)

Instead of giving in to the world's system which is controlled by "the prince and power of the air", the "god of this world" -- God exhorts us to stand in opposition to Satan.

"He will flee from you" - We have God's promise that victory is possible (cp. Christ's victory - Mt. 4:1-11) if we stand with firm confidence in God's promise and with the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:12-17).

When Satan sees that he has been defeated, he like an embarrassed coward will run away and vanish.

3. Draw near to God (v. 8a)

Worldliness is what separated you from God, and now you must return.

True repentance will be evidenced by a desire to get as close to God as possible. God will favorably respond ("draw nigh to you") but you must make the first move (cp. Prodigal Son - Lk. 15:20)

B. YOU MUST TOTALLY FORSAKE SIN (v. 8b-9)

Worldliness always leaves its mark. Cleansing from its pollution and stains is needed.

1. You need a thorough cleansing from sin (v. 8b).

"Hands" - symbolic of evil actions (deeds; outer defilement). You have done that which is wicked and have "bloody hands"

"Hearts" - symbolic of evil motives (thoughts; inner defilement)

"Doubleminded" = two-souled (cp. 1:8). Refers to divided affections (the world and God).

2. You need a genuine sorrow for sin (v. 9)

"Be afflicted" = be aware of your wretchedness and shame because of sin.

"Mourn and weep" = have deep grief and sobbing tears because of sin.

(Cp. Peter's weeping - Mk. 14:72)

"Laughter" = loud, hilarious times as pleasure-loving friends of the world.

Laughter has its place (Ps. 126:2), but not when you are in sin.

"Joy to heaviness" = downcast expression - as publican who felt such shame for sin that he would not lift up his eyes to heaven (Lk. 18:13).

We need to be broken-hearted over our sins (cp. Isaiah's reaction) rather than being great justifiers of our sin.

"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17) (Cp. Ps. 34:18).

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word" (Is. 66:2)