

James 4:1-10

Introduction:

1. Subjects previously covered in our study of James include "facing temptations" (1:2-18), "hearing and doing the Word" (1:19-27), "respect of persons" (2:1-13), "faith and works" (2:14-26), "a warning for teachers" (3:1), "the use of the tongue" (3:2-12), and "true and false wisdom" (3:13-18).
2. In his contrast of true and false wisdom, James showed how worldly wisdom promotes strife and division (3:14-16).
3. (4:1-10) James wrote in more detail about strife among Christians, including:
 - a. the *cause* of strife (vs.1-3)
 - b. the *condition* of those who cause strife (vs.4-5)
 - c. the *cure* for strife (vs.6-10).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-3) THE CAUSE OF STRIFE
 - A. (vs.1) The cause of wars and fighting is identified.
 1. James began by asking, "*From whence come wars and fightings among you?*"
 2. James answered his question by asking another question that reveals the cause of wars and fighting -- "*lusts.*"
 3. When Christians pursue worldly desires instead of abstaining from them, the end result will be wars and fighting.
 - B. (vs.2-3) The cause of Christians killing one another is identified.
 1. A Christian does not necessarily have to take someone else's life to kill him (1 John 3:15).
 2. Christians may "kill" other Christians because of things they do not have (envy).
 3. They do not have the things they want because they have not asked for them.
 4. They do not have the things they ask for because they ask out of selfish motives.
 5. When our desires are not in harmony with God's will, the end result will be killing, fighting, and wars.
 - C. This information should cause us to pursue true wisdom from above (3:17-18).
- II. (vs.4-5) THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO CAUSE STRIFE
 - A. Those who cause strife are guilty of spiritual adultery.
 1. A person involved in strife is a friend of the world and an enemy of God (1 John 2:15-16).
 2. A person involved in strife is a spiritual adulterer because he has been unfaithful to God.
 - B. Those involved in strife are guilty of serious offenses: fighting, killing, spiritual adultery, and being enemies of God.
- III. (vs.6-10) THE CURE FOR STRIFE
 - A. (vs.6a) God's grace is the cure.
 1. God's grace does not condone the sinful behavior described in vs.1-5 (Titus 2:11-12).
 2. However, through His grace God will forgive those who comply with His will.
 - B. (vs.6b-9) God's will for those involved in strife includes:
 1. humility (vs.6b)
 2. submission to God (vs.7)
 - a. People involved in strife are in submission to Satan.
 - b. Satan is to be resisted (1 Peter 5:8-9).
 3. drawing near to God (vs.8a)
 4. cleansing (vs.8b)
 5. true remorse (vs.9).
 - C. (vs.10) God will forgive and lift up those who comply with His will in humility (1 Peter 5:6).