

James 11 The earthly wisdom

- ¹ Why do you fight and argue among yourselves? Isn't it because of your sinful longings? They fight inside you. ² You want something, but you can't get it. You kill and want what others have. But you can't have what you want. You argue and fight. You don't have what you want, because you don't ask God. ³ When you do ask for something, you don't receive it. Why? Because you ask for the wrong reason. You want to spend your money on your sinful pleasures.
- ⁴ You are not faithful to God. Don't you know that to be a friend of the world is to hate God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

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⁵ Don't you know what Scripture says? The spirit that God caused to live in us wants us to belong only to God. Don't you think Scripture has a reason for saying that? ⁶ God continues to give us more grace. That's why Scripture says,

"God opposes those who are proud.
But he gives grace to those who are not." —(*Proverbs*
3:34)

⁷ So obey God. Stand up to the devil. He will run away from you. ⁸ Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Make your hearts pure, you who can't make up your minds.

⁹ Be full of sorrow. Cry and sob. Change your laughter to crying. Change your joy to sadness. ¹⁰ Bow down to the Lord. He will lift you up.

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James presented to us in chapter 3:13-18 a description of divine wisdom, and a description of earthly wisdom, which is evil and certainly does not come from heaven. In chapter 4 James gives details of this earthly evil wisdom.

1. Wars and fights. 4:1-2.

James was speaking to the church, the believers in the church. He means that we undertake wars and fights in the form of complaining and arguing against each other. Putting each other down and so on.

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Titus in 3:8-9 said “⁸ You can trust that saying. Those things are important. Treat them that way. Then those who have trusted in God will be careful to commit themselves to doing what is good. Those things are excellent. They are for the good of everyone.

⁹ But keep away from foolish disagreements. Don't argue about family histories. Don't make trouble. Don't fight about what the law teaches. Don't argue about things like that. It doesn't do any good. It doesn't help anyone”.

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These things led us to live a divided life among families, friends, church member, friends from work and neighbours.

That is why James was warning us about the power of the tongue in chapter 3. It looks like we have adopted the ways of the world. War and fighting become part of who we are.

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain.

You fight and make war.

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Murder is like what Jesus said in Matthew 5:21-26, and 1John 3:11-15 “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer.”

2. The unaccepted prayer. Chapter 4:2-3

James moves here to describe the earthly wisdom from another perspective, from speaking about our relationships with one another to speaking about our relationship with God.

You ask, and you do not receive, because you ask amiss that you may spend it on your pleasures.

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Yes, Jesus said ask and it will be given, but this is in condition to the will of God, not to our own desires that leads us to destruction.

In Matthew 6:9-10 Jesus said “⁹ "This is how you should pray.

" 'Our Father in heaven,
may your name be honoured.

¹⁰ May your kingdom come.

May what you want to happen be done
on earth as it is done in heaven”.

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In order to know God's will, we need to have a pure heart. If I keep sin in my heart, the Lord will not listen to me.

And when my heart is pure, there will be one love, the love of God and His kingdom in my life.

3. The love of the world. Verses 4:4-5.

Adulterers and adulteresses, those who are not faithful in their relationship with their partners, are like the people of God who are not faithful in their relationship with God.

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Jeremiah 3:20 “But you people are like a woman who is not faithful to her husband.

Israel, you have not been faithful to me,”

Instead of loving God who has given us everything, we are in love with the world. Money, women, men, position, and everything against God.

James puts it very clear here: Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

In verse 5 James said “the Spirit who dwells in us does not approve what we are doing and will not accept us when we love the world”.

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4. The reason for this behaviour!

In order to know the solution for the problem we have to learn of the reason why we are acting like this.

The answer in chapter 4:1 and 3 : from your desires for pleasure. We are in spiritual warfare against the old man who desires the pleasure of the world. Titus 3:3 said “At one time we too acted like fools. We didn't obey God. We were tricked. We were controlled by all kinds of longings and pleasures. We were full of evil. We wanted what belongs to others. People hated us, and we hated one another.”

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5. The solution. Chapter 4:6-10.

a. The great grace: verse 6.

What a wonderful comfort, God knows who we are and where we are, and in what condition we are in!

He gives us more grace. More of you in my life and I will worship you. Yes, more of Christ and we will be able to worship Him. Less of Christ and we will love the world. More grace, more of Christ.

b. The way of humbleness.

Humble your heart and receive His grace.

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The more our heart is humble the more we will receive from Him. Remember God resists the proud.

The more we become proud the more we will love the world.

c. Orders for your journey.chapter 4:7-9.

1. Submit to God. (live the life of obedience).
2. Resist the devil. (use your power and authority to defeat the devil).
3. Draw near to God. (love the Lord your God with all you heart and soul).
4. Cleanse your hands. (live a holy life, a life of repentance).
5. Rejoice always. (know that you have the prefect victory in Christ Jesus our Lord).

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6. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. (and He will lift you up.

Amen.

Let us pray.