

- The Letter James writes to the Christians scattered abroad is one of the richest letters in reference to its spiritual meat. James wastes no time in giving his purpose and reasoning for the writing of this letter. In **James 1:2-4**, the inspired writer makes it clear that the testing of faith for the Christian is for their good, and that through these testings they will grow to be perfect, mature, complete, and lacking nothing in reference to their living faith in Christ.
- As we look through this book, we come to see the many different areas in which the Christian might encounter adversity in their lives. In **Chapter 1**: the Christian might feel lacking in his or her wisdom. James says to act in faith. The Christian might become discouraged by constant temptations and James gives the source of such. The Christians have many blessings from God and James reminds them of God's expectations for them in their use of those blessings. In **Chapter 2**: James focuses on the Christian's interactions with others. They were not to be prejudice towards others for any reason. They were also to show their faith in God and their love for others through their actions. Words are cheap, James writes, but actions go a long way. In **Chapter 3**: James gives warnings against improper use of our words. The words of the Christian have great power and we are to yield those words with respect. In **Chapter 4**: James dives into the battle that every person wages against the flesh. He gives the problem and then gives solutions to winning that battle. And then finally in **Chapter 5**: The Inspired Brother of Jesus gives instructions on how to handle these last days. They would face adversities, but they could overcome and become mature and complete in their faiths if they stood in the Lord.
- I would like for us to give our attention this evening to **James 4**. This entire letter was in our daily Bible reading over the past couple of weeks, and I would like for us to focus on this important chapter of this great letter. This battle against the flesh is waged everyday in the lives of the Christian, yet our goal is to bring this body and its desires under submission just as the Apostle Paul states in **I Corinthians 9:27** that he disciplines his body so that he himself is not disqualified in this race of life. James gives us the issue, but this gives us 3 great solutions to winning this battle against the flesh. ***Read James 4***

I. The Struggle: The Flesh Wants To Rule (vv.1-4)

- A. The flesh sets opposed to God and spiritual things.

1. The Apostle Paul had much to say about this in **Galatians 5:13-26**.
2. Paul's main points center around this battle that exists between the flesh and the Spirit.
3. The flesh seeks to serve its destructive desires, but the Spirit looks to lead us in the ways of God.
4. The flesh leads us into all sorts of sins. (**vv.19-21**)
5. The Spirit looks to produce within us righteous characteristics. (**vv. 22,23**)
6. Those who are of God have put to death that life and its actions and now live according to the Spirit. (**vv.24,25; Romans 6**)
7. Some of the same issues that were plaguing the Galatians seem to be bothering the recipients of James letter. Thus, they needed to be reminded about this battle of flesh and Spirit. (**4:1-4**)

- B. This world and its ruler, Satan, look to lead the flesh to corruption.

1. Satan looks to take advantage of the desires of the flesh and lead us to sin.
2. The recognizes and we must recognize that temptations are just a part of life. We are not condemned because of temptations themselves, but we are condemned when we act upon and give into those temptations and give way to the flesh. (**James 1:12-15**)
3. Our battle of this life is to fight against the flesh and its sinful desires. The battle will not be easy by any means, and we cannot overcome by ourselves.
4. That is why James spends the rest of this section by giving us 3 solutions to how we can overcome the flesh and its evil desires.

II. The Solutions: Submit To God, Trust In God, & Do Good Always

- A. Submit To God (**vv.5-12**)

1. God greatly desires for the Spirit to dwell in us and for us to be led by it. (**v.5**)
2. James asked if they believe this or not, and if they do, then they ought to know that they could not submit to both the world and the Spirit at the same time.
3. We know that Jesus well said that one cannot serve two masters. (**Matthew 6:24**)
4. Therefore, the one who wishes to win this battle must submit to God and be led by the Spirit.

5. He cannot be a proud man who believes he knows the way. Only the humble man who submits to God's will be complete and in harmony with God. (**vv.6-8**)
6. The penitent sinner will show his humility through his actions. He will be sorrowful for his sins and turn from them. In doing so, God will lift him up to greater service. (**vv.9,10**)
7. But not only that, the humble Christian will also recognize his lowliness and leave final judgements up to God.
8. He will not, in his arrogance, pronounce final condemnation on his neighbor. Instead, he will leave the judgements to the Lord. (**vv.11,12**)
9. This isn't to say that we cannot make judgements of any sort. We are to walk in the light and to do so we must know what is light and what is darkness, but we do not hand down the final say for another's soul. That is left up to Almighty God. We must submit to Him in all things.

B. Trust In God (**vv.13-16**)

1. James then points to the man who might trust in those temporary things over trusting in God.
2. This man who doesn't trust in God makes all of these plans and puts his confidence in himself alone. He plans as if he knows for certain that he will be able to do such things. (**vv.13,14**)
3. This might remind you of the parable of the rich man that Jesus told in **Luke 12:16-21**. You'll notice that in this parable the man uses 13 personal pronouns. He continually refers to himself without giving any attention or thought to God. Where did that get him in the long run?
4. James says that such boasting in self is arrogance and that boasting is sin. (**v.16**)
5. Instead, our boasting ought to be in God. We should have Him on our minds when we go to make plans for the future. "If God wills we will...." or "If God blesses us so then we will...." ought to be our mindset.
6. The bottom line for this solution is this: Make your plans, but make sure that you make those plans with your eyes focused on God.

C. Do Good Always (**v.17**)

1. James concludes this section of thoughts by simply imploring and admonishing there Christians to just do good.
2. This battle against the flesh that wants to serve self and do evil is won by doing those things that are good.
3. It isn't just enough for us to not do bad, and end up doing nothing. No, it is our duty to not just avoid evil, but we are then to turn around and do that which is good.
4. Let's consider **Galatians 5**, again. Not only are we to avoid the works of the flesh, but we are to fill ourselves with the fruits of the Spirit. (**Gal. 5:22-25**)
5. If we are constantly living out actions that are good and righteous then we leave no room for the flesh to do as it would wish and sin against God.
6. Doing these good works is also a result of the submission and trust in God. Submitting to the grace of God will produce within us good works. (**Titus 2:11-14**)
7. May we be constantly busy doing the good will of God.

This life is a constant battle of tug of war for all of us. Satan is busy at work trying to lead us into doing things that are contrary to the will of God. What is our mindset in this battle?? Are we focusing on those things of the Spirit and those things that are pleasing in the sight of God? If we are then our submission to God will be evident. Our trust in God will be true, and those things that we do will be those things that are good in the eyes of God. May God help us to stand strong in this battle against the flesh, and may He be glorified in all of our actions.