

“The Pollution & The Solution!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. A friend **Jeff Jackson** is raising \$ for a Farming Project in Phoenix, for Karen Refugees.
1. Shakey’s Tem, Thurs Oct 14th, 5:30-8:30pm (25% donated)
- B. If you were to read only **vs. 1a** (*just the question*) you might come to a different conclusion!
1. *They come from:* my wife; my kids; my boss! [We’ll see, no, they come from “me”!]
- C. **Forget the chapter break**...we move right from the fork **tongue** of ch.3 **to** the result of its **venom** in ch.4 **wars & fights!**
1. **Q:** How many fights have you picked in your lifetime? (**physical** fights; **emotional** fights w/your parents, w/spouse, w/children, a co-worker, another Christian)
 2. **Fighting is something that comes to us naturally.** Because we’re born with a **scrappy nature** that prefers going for the jugular, **to** giving in.
 3. **Fighting started** just steps outside the front gate of Eden. **In the field stands Cain...& there lies Abel!** :(
- D. **World Wide Military Expenditures:** (2008 #'s)
1. **U.S.** Spent 623 Billion; **Rest-of-world** 500 Billion [next would be **China** 65 Billion]
 2. According to **New Internationalist** magazine, “**Global military expenditure is now running well over \$1 million per minute.**”
- E. Unfortunately, it isn’t much different **within** the church!
1. Of the **early church** it was said, “Behold how they **love** one another!” **Today**, people might say, “Behold how they **compete** w/one another!”
 - a) **Why** is it sometimes so difficult for God’s people to get along?
 2. **Among you** – **who?** See **3:1;4:11** [The wars **amongst** us are caused by wars **within** us!]
- F. Here James addresses **the Pollution** of **the human heart & the Solution** to this problem.

II. **THE POLLUTION & THE SOLUTION!**

- A. **THE POLLUTION!** (1-5)
- B. (1) **Wars/quarrels** refers to **corporate fighting** (a campaign of war); **whereas** **Fights/conflicts** refers to **individual battles**.

1. When it comes to **church fights** we see everything from hand to hand combat to all out war! [From **real** bullets, to **verbal** bullets]
 - a) In **Ireland** today the Catholics & Protestants still have on their boxing gloves!
 - b) **Seminaries** spar over doctrinal issues (Calvinism vs. Arminianism; The timing of the 2nd Coming of Christ)
 - (1) **2 ministers** got into a fight about what they considered to be an *important doctrinal matter*. They settled the fight when the first minister told the second: *"Look, what are we fighting over? We're both striving to do the Lord's work. You do it your way and I'll do it His way!"*
 - c) **Christian authors** fire dirty ink at other authors, proving again *"the Pen is mightier than the sword!"*
 - d) Right down to **our own church**. We have our own *"Euodias and Syntyche's"*.
 - e) We have Denominational splits; Church splits; Christian Friend splits; & even Christian Husband/Wife splits! [I guess it's our **"Pugnacious Nature!"**]
2. **No wonder why** James deals with the problem of *conflicts among Christians*.
 - a) Fighting, worshiping, fighting some more; here we are 2000 yrs later still the same.
 - b) We're like kids on a playground. *We're scrapin 1 minute, playing together the next.*

C. **So, who started all this?** (i.e. fighting)

1. **2 things:** an inner desire/*pleasures* & an outer desire/*the world*.

D. **[#1] Self Lovers!** - Pleasures.

E. **Pleasure** – desire or passion [A neutral term; context determines. *Can be evil/good*]

1. Pleasure is not wrong (i.e. Buddhism)...only a *"driving desire for pleasures"*.

2. This word **ἡδονή/hedone/hay-do-nay** [where we get **Hedonism**]

- a) **Hedonism** = *pleasure* is the chief good in life.
- b) The **Christian life** is **not** a life of saying, **"No!"** [But of affirmation & enjoyment]
- c) We ought to be *the biggest Pleasure seekers* in this universe! **Really? Yep!** Because, God is the author of all **true pleasure!**
 - (1) This is where **John Piper** develops his Christian Hedonism idea, *"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."*
 - (a) Based upon the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* "the chief end of man is to glorify God **and** enjoy Him forever." Or as Piper suggests, "to glorify God **by** enjoying Him forever."
 - (2) **The Key:** We just **must not** seek pleasure from **the wrong source & in the wrong way!**
- d) **Q:** How often does the bible speak of *joy, enjoyment, pleasure?*

- e) We must immerse ourselves in *His pleasures* by immersing ourselves *in Him!*
- f) Ps.16:11 *In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*
- g) Ps.37:4 *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

F. 3 problems if pleasure is left unchecked!

1. **Murder** - most of us have only *killed* w/our thoughts. *Assassinating* someone else's character.
2. **Fight & war/quarrels** - those murderous *thoughts* spur us on to *wound w/words*.
3. **Total breakdown in prayer** - **Why?** Because we're too busy fighting.
 - a) We'd rather *slug things out* rather than **surrender** the situation to God.
 - (1) Here he anticipates a *fighters* response "I did to ask & He didn't answer".
 - b) But that's because even our prayers can become selfish. *Asking God w/wrong motives* (3) [*Requests were legit; Reasons was illegit!*]
 - (1) **Example:** If you only pray for your own cravings & passions; *rather than* Gods glory, God's service, or consideration for other people.
 - (a) Such prayers are an **insult** to God!
 - c) **Man** finds it hard to **get** what he wants, *because* he does not want the best; **God** finds it hard to **give** because He would give the best, *and* man will not take it.¹

G. [#2] **World Lovers!** - the world.

1. **Adulteresses** – Warning against Wandering! [*One who is unfaithful to his wedding vows*]
 - a) **Stop any affairs with the world!**
 - b) Returning from Sunday School 1 day, where the 10 Commandments had been the topic, a boy asked his father, "Daddy, what does it mean when it says, Thou shalt not commit agriculture?" To which he have his son the smooth reply: "Son, that just means that you're not supposed to plow another man's field."

H. They had fallen in love *with the world!*

1. *i.e. the world **apart from God*** - It signifies a *self-centered, Satan-controlled philosophy* that is hostile toward God.
- I. *It is right for the church to be in the world; It is wrong for the world to be in the church!*
 1. *It is right* for a **boat** to be *in the water*; *It is wrong* for **water** to be *in the boat!*

¹ George MacDonald in George MacDonald, An Anthology, p. 130

J. Because **Abraham** was separated from sin, he was *the friend of God*; but **Lot** was *the friend of the world*.

1. "A whole generation of Christians has come up believing that it is possible to *accept Christ w/o forsaking the world*." A.W. Tozer
2. *Friend of the world* - a warm, familiar attitude toward the evil world. *Adapting the worlds set of values*. It's wanting what the world wants.
3. *Wants* (4b) - i.e. *Chooses* (not slips into; but chooses to befriend the world, thus automatically becomes *God's enemy*)

K. Let's break it down to some specific examples:²

1. If you are a **gifted person w/leadership capabilities not being used**, you may have a tendency to be impatient & manipulate circumstances to push yourself to the front.
 - a) God says, "Wait, let Me open the doors. Take advantage of this time away from the limelight to deepen you trust in Me."
2. If you are **single & eager to get married**, you may be tempted to panic & hurry into a marriage relationship.
 - a) But God's advice would be, "Don't run ahead of Me, I know your desires. Lean on Me & I'll help you find the right mate."
3. If you've **worked hard & have done a good job, but somebody else received the credit**. The world says that you should fight for your rights! Promote yourself, because if you don't, nobody else will.
 - a) But God's viewpoint runs, "There is no need to clamor for recognition. You're here to do your work for My glory, not yours. I have seen the good that you have done & I will reward you." [For God is not unjust to forget your work & labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, & do minister]^{Heb6:10}

L. **Illustration**: Suppose that in a certain community lives a man and his wife who love each other very much. Across the street lives a man who develops a hatred for the woman's husband. One night he invades their home and kills him. Although he is arrested, a loophole in the law allows him to escape punishment, and he is released to return to the community. **Now imagine** that in a few short weeks you see the widow and her husband's murderer walking down the street together. Her hand is slipped into his arm and she looks smilingly into his face. She says to him, "I'm so happy." **What would you say about a woman like that?** - Surely you would brand her as **disloyal to her husband's memory and unworthy to bear his name**.

1. We must never forget that *this godless world hated Jesus* enough to **kill Him**.

² Charles Swindoll: James; pg.137.

2. One who walks *hand in hand* with a system headed by our Lord's enemies and becomes friendly with them is **disloyal** to Jesus Christ.
3. Only those who keep themselves *unspotted from the world*(1:27) have a right to bear the name **Christian**.
4. Remember, *the Spirit yearns jealously*(5) [NIV *the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely*]

M. **THE SOLUTION!** (6-10)

N. (6) *God will give you grace, more grace* - abundant grace to those who are willing to **humble** themselves & **wait**.

1. *Not saving Grace*...it's grace enough! **Regardless of your situation or need... ALWAYS!**

O. Note, James makes *a humble sandwich* between vs.7-10 here (*humble*: end of 6, beg of 10)

1. What's in-between these "*humble buns*" are **4 slices** of *cold-cut commands*, that help us in becoming humble. [Submit to God; Resist the Devil; Draw near to God; cleanse & purify]
2. These are steps to breaking off our *love affair* w/the world!

P. **[1] Submit to God!** - Cease fighting & surrender your will to His control.

1. "If you will not **submit**, your faith is a lie, your hope is a delusion, your prayer is an insult, your peace is presumption, your end will be despair." *Spurgeon at His Best*

Q. **[2] Resist the Devil!** - resist his promptings.

R. **Illustration:** Sheep ranchers have tried just about everything to stop **crafty coyotes** from killing their **sheep**. They has used *odor sprays, electric fences, & scare-coyotes*. Have placed battery-operated radios near them. Corralled them at night, herded them at day.

1. Then they discovered **the llama** - *the aggressive, funny-looking, afraid-of-nothing llama*. Llamas don't appear to be afraid of anything, When they see something, **they put their head up and walk straight toward it**. That is aggressive behavior as far as the coyote is concerned, and they won't have anything to do with that. Coyotes are opportunists, and llamas take that opportunity away.
2. Apparently llamas know the truth of what James writes: "**Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you**". The moment we sense his attack through temptation is the moment we should **face it and deal with it** for *what it is*.

3. You are either resisting the devil **or** resisting the Lord! **Which one?**

S. **[3] Draw Near to God!** - stay close to God, by developing a loving companionship.

- T. [4] **Cleanse your hands & Purify your hearts!** - cleanse yourself from any *moral defilement* that may have created enmity between ourselves & *others*, or *God*.
1. (9) *Are you laughing when you should be weeping over your sins?*
 2. He's appealing for godly sorrow, the intense kind that grows out of a **deep awareness** of our sin.
- U. So, *how are fights stopped?* Vs.10!
- V. **Humble Yourselves!** - Say, "*uncle*" to the Spirit's promptings & surrender to God, letting **Him** do your fighting.
1. **Humility**...the mother of all virtues!
- W. **Humility's 2-fold blessing:** *God will give you grace, more grace!* (6) *God will lift you up.*
1. Job 5:11 *he sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.*
 2. *Hudson Taylor* once noted, "God uses men who are *weak* and *feeble enough* to lean on him."