

## The Book of James

### Chapter 4

#### “Where all our Problems Come From”

[Return To  
All Commentary](#)

On Friday, one of the most difficult things that I have ever been through happened.

As most of you know, Jennifer Dixon passed away a little over a week ago at just 17 years old, after a terrible automobile accident out at Clear Creek.

On Friday, we joined with Joe and Elyse Hittle of Calvary Chapel of Payson, and all of our friends from Calvary Chapel of Holbrook had a service for Jennifer and the family at the High School Gymnasium in Holbrook.

There were perhaps 400 or so people there, many young people, all looking for answers, many with open hearts.

We really felt that this was more of an outreach to introduce Jesus to these people, than it was a funeral or a memorial.

Because Jennifer was so young, we knew that people were searching for answers, and so we determined to tell them about Jesus.

We really felt that there would be perhaps 100 or more people make a commitment to Jesus that day, and maybe 100 or more rededicate their lives to Jesus.

So I began to tell them about how Jennifer had gotten off the right path in following Jesus, but that at the end she had returned to the Lord.

I talked about how life can be over so quickly and how important it is to make sure you are ready, when your time comes to pass from this life.

I spoke of the fact that it was because of what Jesus has done in giving His life, that Jennifer was in Heaven, and that every person that was there needed to make a decision for the Lord if they wanted the same hope of heaven.

About 20 minutes into the message, in the first 2 rows in front of me, I was interrupted by the family on the mothers side and told to **“Stop, we have had enough, we don’t want to hear any more of this...”**

I sat down as other members of the family came forward to state that they wanted for me to continue because they felt that everyone needed to hear what was being said.

The Lord told me to just stay seated and let it all go. The service ended abruptly with no invitation to receive Jesus, no opportunity for the Lord to really complete what He was wanting to do that day.

I grieve this morning, not for myself, I was not personally offended, but I really was grieved for the hardness of the hearts of the people who would interrupt something that the Lord was doing in reaching the people there with the wonderful news of Jesus love for them.

As I awoke at 5 yesterday morning, to pray and prepare my heart to get this study ready for this morning, I realized that everything that happened at Jennifer's memorial is what we are going to be talking about this morning, is found here in chapter 4 of the Book of James. The condition of the Human heart.

#### **James 4**

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

**I have discovered in my short 47 years of life here on the earth, that the fallen nature that the Bible describes as being present in all of us, is absolutely the truth.**

- ☞ **We are** all a fallen race of beings.
- ☞ **Everything that the Bible says** about our hearts, attitudes, selfishness, and Pride are absolutely true.
- ☞ **I have seen it in my own life** and I have seen it in the lives of others.

The service stopped abruptly Friday, because someone was not hearing something that they wanted to hear.

- ☞ **And, they were hearing** other things about Jesus, that they did not want to hear.

**Where do these wars and fights come from, verse 1 asks?**

- ☞ **They come from this fallen nature** that we inherited from Adam.
- ☞ **The desire** for having ever thing our own way.
- ☞ **They come from a heart** that is inherently selfish and self serving.

There is a common saying today: "**To your own heart be true...**" In reality the Word of God says that our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and that we do not even know what is truly in our own heart.

#### **Jeremiah 17:9**

"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

- ☞ **The purpose of chapter 4 here this morning**, Is that the Lord wants to tell us the truth about us, about how we all truly are.
- ☞ **He does not say these things to us to condemn us**, but so that we can see things from the perspective that He sees them.

When Adam was created, he was totally focused on others. Genesis gives us a hint of this when it says:

### **Genesis 2:25**

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and **were not ashamed**.

Adam and Eve were so focused on the other that they didn't even notice or care that they were naked.

- ☞ **Why weren't** they ashamed?
- ☞ **Because they were not focused** on their selves...
- ☞ **We notice** that as soon as Adam turned against God, that he immediately became a "Selfish being".
- ☞ **He and Eve now turned to look at themselves**, and realized they had no clothing and they were ashamed.

**Every person that has been born on this planet since Adam, has inherited this same Selfishness, this same inward focus on self and the desire to fulfill self.**

### **James 4**

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from **your desires** for pleasure that war in your members?

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

**All of the fights all of the wars in this world come from Human selfishness and a desire to fulfill self.**

- ☞ **The abrupt ending to the service** for Jennifer ended because a few people were only thinking of them selves and not of Jennifer, or the hundreds of other people that were there on that day.
- ☞ **Because of selfishness and self desire**, people did not have the opportunity to respond to Jesus offer of eternal life.

So James begins chapter 4 with instruction to us that even now, as we have been "Born Again" since we have given our lives to Jesus, we still will have this struggle with our flesh in it wanting to satisfy it's own desires.

- ☞ **But because we have been "Born Again"**, We have the choice as believers in Jesus, to let the flesh rule us, or to continue to build up the new spiritual side of us that became alive when Jesus came to live in our hearts.
- ☞ **Whatever side we feed and build up**, Either the Flesh or the spirit, will be the side that is dominant in our life.

- ☞ **Whatever side we** put down and deny in our life, will wither and fade.

## James 4

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

**Do you really know the reasons that you want the things that you desire in your life?**

- ☞ **I find that many times**, I have deceived myself, convinced myself of the fact that I really need this thing in my life, and so I seek to justify why I want it.

*“Well I need this new\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_, and I can come up with just about any reason as to why I need to do this things or buy this thing...”*

- ☞ **In reality, the Bible is the Word of God**, and it is very good at showing us what we really are like as these fallen creatures.
- ☞ **Have you noticed** that we can justify just about anything that we want to do or have done?

*“You ask and do not receive, because you are asking for it for the wrong reason...to spend it or have it for our own pleasure...”*

- ☞ **This is meant to be** a great encouragement for us, if we really belong to Jesus, to check our motivations with the Lord.

*“Lord Jesus, I want this\_\_\_\_\_, but what do you think Lord?”*

*“Lord Jesus, I want to do\_\_\_\_\_, but what do you think Lord?”*

- ☞ **Have you ever noticed** that when we really want to get something or really want to do something and we have already justified it in our own mind, we don't really want to ask the Lord what He thinks.
- ☞ **We really will not even listen to** or seek counsel or advice from another Christian, because our heart knows that what we are doing is not right, and we don't want someone else to tell us it is not right.

**What is the real reason that we want this or want to do this?**

- ☞ **Here the Holy Spirit says** that our natural tendency is that we want it for selfish reasons.
- ☞ **So, as I belong to Jesus now**, I need to check my heart with the Lord, to see what my motivations are for doing the things I do...
- ☞ **If my reasons are selfish**, and many times they are, I need to be willing to admit that I really don't need it, but I just want it.

**I think if we would do this, then everything we think we need, or everything we think we should do, we would find that we really don't need it or we will find that we won't do it.**

When we pray and ask the Lord for something, what is the real reason that we want it?

- ⊕ **The purpose of prayer** is not really to get what I want.
- ⊕ **The purpose of prayer is to seek** what the Lord wants.
- ⊕ **Prayer is not** to try and change God's mind.
- ⊕ **Prayer is to change my mind** and bring it into agreement with the Lord's Mind and heart.

### **Matthew 6:10**

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

There is nothing wrong with saying, "**Lord I don't really know what your will is in this situation...**" and then offering up to Him a few suggestions as to what we might think He wants to do.

- ⊕ **But then we should be willing to accept whatever** He decides to do. We should be content that He knows much better than I do, what should be done.

I think that one of the things that really disturbed the family on the mothers side, is that I suggested that perhaps because Jennifer had not been on the right path in following Jesus, He took her home to be with Him now, so that she wouldn't be lost later...

- ⊕ **If your perspective of God is limited** to only understand Him from meeting your own expectations, then you will be very uncomfortable when someone suggests that God works in ways outside of your expectations.
- ⊕ **If your perspective is that the Lord is always Loving, Good and Kind** and that everything that He does is right, then you don't need for Him to explain to you why He does things the way He does them.

**It is completely within the Lord's character to take a person home now, if He knows that later they would fall away from Him.**

- ⊕ **One of my first pastors**, Raul Ruess of Calvary Chapel of West Covina, Ca., used to tell us that He had prayed and given the Lord his permission to take him home if Raul began to fall away from Him, because he didn't want to be lost.

When the Lord answers our prayers, it is always according to His Unlimited knowledge of all things, and is based solely on His Goodness and Love towards us.

**Whenever we pray, the Lord always answers us, he does so in just 3 different ways.**

1. Yes.

2. No.
3. Wait.

**Yes**, means that what we have prayed is in agreement with His will and the purposes He has.

**No**, means that our desires are not in alignment with His purposes.

- ⊖ **Perhaps we asked** for something for our self for strictly selfish reasons.
- ⊖ **Maybe our prayer** seemed to be for someone else, but our underlying motivation was that there was something in it for us.
- ⊖ **Perhaps what we are asking the Lord** for would be harmful to us or to someone else.

**If your 8 year old asked you for the keys to your car, you would say no, because you know that**

1. They are not mature enough yet,
2. They can't handle the car yet,
3. They would harm themselves and perhaps someone else.

**Often the Lord answers "Wait".**

- ⊖ **Our request is in agreement** with His will.
- ⊖ **Our request is not motivated** for selfish reasons.
- ⊖ **But the timing** is maybe just a little early.
- ⊖ **There may be some things** that the Lord need to do first to prepare things, before He will answer that prayer.

Now, let me say that on the subject of asking the Lord to meet our needs, here is what said about that:

### **Matthew 6:25-33**

25 "Therefore **I say to you, do not worry about your life**, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; **yet your heavenly Father feeds them**. Are you not of more value than they?"

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"

28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if **God so clothes the grass of the field**, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

**33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

**Just pray acknowledge what the Lord has just said here:**

- ☞ *“Father, you already know what my needs are...”*
- ☞ *“Father if you take care of the birds of the air, then you will take care of me...”*
- ☞ *“Father I am not going to worry about how my needs are going to get met, you said you know what those needs are, and you promised you would take care of them...”*

Then Jesus said that if we are keeping Him first in our life and seeking His kingdom and His will, that He will just automatically take care of all our needs...

- ☞ **If we find** that perhaps the Lord is not answering this prayer to supply for us.
  1. **Is this a Need or A Want?**, He said He would take care of your **needs**, not **you wants**.
  2. **Am I Keeping Jesus first in my life?** If I am not keeping Jesus first in my life, or if I am making compromises in my life, then the Lord is not obligated to supply all of our needs.

#### **James 4**

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

**It is interesting to me, that from the Lords perspective, when we belong to Him, he sees us as “Married to Him”.**

- ☞ **Marriage is about commitment**, faithfulness, Trust, Love and Surrender of self to the other...
- ☞ **So, from the Lords perspective**, when He is not first in our life, when we give our self to anything else other than to Him, He views it as Adultery.
- ☞ **That sounds pretty harsh**, but we have to understand that the Lords love for us is so tremendous, that it hurts Him greatly when we do not give back to Him the same Love, commitment and faithfulness.

**In reality, here James says that if we are in a friendship with the world, we cannot be the friend of the Lord...**

- ☞ **He call us to decide**, to make a commitment, either to Him exclusively or to the world exclusively.
- ☞ **There is nothing more heart wrenching** that a marriage in which one of the partners is not totally committed to the marriage
- ☞ **Nothing more hurtful** than when one of the partners is unfaithful to the other.

- ⊞ **We give up in our marriages so easily today**, without taking the time and whatever work is need to humble ourselves, surrender out rights and seek to keep the marriage intact, FOREVER!

#### **James 4**

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

**Often we think of the term Jealousy” as being a negative thing.**

- ⊞ **In reality, from the Lord’s perspective**, it is a very good thing that He is “*Jealous*” for your love.
- ⊞ **Our jealousy** is motivated by selfish reasons, we want something all for our self, and when we can’t have it all for our self, we are jealous.
- ⊞ **When the Lord says that His spirit** that He has placed inside us, “*Yearns for us Jealously*”, He means that He doesn’t want us to have any other love that would take away our love for Him.

We all understand the need for complete, genuine, uncompromised love, it is what we all crave in our own life

- ⊞ **The truth is**, that we can only find this kind of **satisfying and fulfilling love** when we give our entire heart to Jesus.
- ⊞ **You cannot find it in another person**, they will **let you down, hurt you, fail to love** you as completely as you need them to.
- ⊞ **You can’t find it in riches or material things**, because after you get them you find that there is still something missing.

**That longing of our heart for real, fervent satisfying love, is the same desire that the Lord has for us. When we fail to love Him that way, he is Jealous for our love....**

#### **James 4**

6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

“God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble.”

**The Lord really knows us, he remembers that He made us from the “dust of the Ground”, so he has great compassion for us.**

#### **Genesis 2:7**

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground

#### **Psalms 103:13-14**

13 As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.

14 For He knows our frame; **He remembers that we are dust.**

**There is not one of us that lives up to the standards that the Lord requires of us.**

### **Romans 3:23**

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

### **Romans 3:10**

As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

- ☞ **But when we get off track and we fail and we fall**, the Lord gives me His Grace, His undeserved favor, He has compassion on me and He remembers I am only a man made from the dirt.
- ☞ **It is not the Lord’s desire to destroy us**, if that was true, He would have already done so.
- ☞ **His desire is to bless us and love us** and pour into us the richness of His great love.

**On the night of Jennifer’s accident, Beth told us that the Lord showed to her in a dream that Jesus had come to Jennifer and told her she was not on the right path.**

- ☞ **That made some that were at the memorial mad** when I told what Beth had said the Lord showed her that Jesus told Jennifer it was time to get back on the right path.
- ☞ **It was said to the crowd after I was told to stop speaking, “Jennifer didn’t have to beg to be forgiven...”**
- ☞ **But why should that make someone mad?** In reality it was the Lord’s Grace that He even came to Jennifer at all...
- ☞ **It was because of His great love** and compassion for Jennifer that He came to her at the hour of her death to reason with her.
- ☞ **Thankfully, Jennifer accepted** what Jesus said and agrees with Him

But that attitude of pride that says, “**She didn’t have to Beg to be forgiven**” is something that God says he hates...

### **James 4**

6... Therefore He says:

**“God resists the proud,**  
But gives grace to the humble.”

**There are 7 things in Proverbs 6 that the Lord says that He hates...the number one thing God hates is PRIDE...**

### **Proverbs 6:16-19**

16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

- 17 **A proud look,**  
A lying tongue,  
Hands that shed innocent blood,
- 18 A heart that devises wicked plans,  
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
- 19 A false witness who speaks lies,  
And one who sows discord among brethren

## There is also a verse in Malachi

### Malachi 2:16

“For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce...

Pride was what cause Lucifer to fall...Pride is what caused Ever to fall, and Adam to fall...And last Friday...Pride was what kept 400 people from having the opportunity to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior...

**And the Lord hates our pride...because pride says that I am greater, wiser and more righteous than God is, and that is the biggest lie in the universe!**

### James 4

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

On the opposite side of pride, is Humility, to just humble yourself before the Lord, admit your sin, admit your guilt, confess your weakness and inability to do anything He asks...

- ☞ **And when we do**, He has great compassion on us.
- ☞ **He will forgive**, He will Heal, He will restore.

Then an important verse here... “Resist the devil and he will flee from you”

- ☞ **Many times we wonder** what it takes to get satan off of our back.
- ☞ *“How can I overcome satan and his demons from drawing into sin?”*

**Just resist him...it drives him crazy and it drives him away...**

### 1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but **God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation **will also make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it.

**When you feel tempted, just resist, just refuse to give in, just walk away, just run away like Joseph, and hold out and hold on...this drives the devil away...**

- ☞ **There are 3 ways** that satan brings temptation to us:

### 1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world—**the lust of the flesh**, the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**—is not of the Father but is of the world.

**In the beginning, it was the same 3 temptation that satan brought to Eve.**

### Genesis 3

6 So when the woman LUST OF THE FLESH **saw that the tree was good for food**, that LUST OF THE EYES **it was pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree PRIDE OF LIFE **desirable to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

- ☞ **Satan tried these same 3 with Jesus**, even trying them in a different order: (Lust of the flesh, Pride of Life, Lust of the Eyes)

### Matthew 4:3-11

3 Now when **the tempter came to Him**, he said, “Since You are the Son of God, command that **these stones become bread**.” (Lust of the Flesh) **(Don’t those big round stones look like bread, aren’t you hungry, you are God turn them into bread)**

4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God**.’”

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “**Since You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down**. For it is written:

“He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and,

‘In their hands they shall bear you up,

Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” (The Pride of Life) **(Prove you are Gods**

**Son by using your power, show everyone Jesus)**

7 Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

8 Again, **the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory**.

9 And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.” (The lust of the Eyes) **(Jesus saw the glory of all the worlds kingdoms, satan said you don’t have to go to the Cross, just worship me, I will give them to you)**

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

11 **Then the devil left Him**, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

**Notice that the way that Jesus defeated satan was 1). The Word of God, 2). Resist him. Then the devil left Him.**

### James 4

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

The solution to remaining strong as a spiritual person is to make the effort to “**Draw Near**” to the Lord.

- ☞ **Remember** that if you feel far from the Lord this morning, HE HASN’T MOVED, it is you that have stopped drawing close to Him.
- ☞ **Because there is a constant battle** between our flesh wanting to be in control and our Spirit wanting to be in control, we must feed the spirit everyday, and put down the flesh everyday.

- ☞ **Verse 8.** every day we have to cleanse our life of the junk that is trying to get in, and purify our hearts, by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

### **Ephesians 5:26**

...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

### **James 4**

9 **Lament and mourn and weep!** Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

**Verses 9–17, all deal with the attitude we should have of our self.**

- ☞ **Verse 9:** The attitude we are supposed to have **over our own failures** and inability to do the right things.
- ☞ **How often do we just sit down and cry over our constant failures** with our temper, our pride, our lust for things, our selfishness?

### **James 4**

11 **Do not speak evil of one another**, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. **Who are you to judge another?**

**This is something that we will always catch ourselves doing, even in the name of “Ministry or being concerned over someone”:**

- ☞ **Speaking about another persons struggle** with sin or their immaturity, or some other problem they are having, and not just **“Judging” it**, but carrying out the execution.
- ☞ **The Bible does not prohibit** a Christian from “Judging Sin”.
- ☞ **The Bible Does prohibit us from Carrying out a judgment and execution** because of sin...

### **1 Corinthians 6:1-3**

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And **if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?**

3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life

### **James 4**

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”;

14 **whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.** For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

15 Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

16 But now you boast in your arrogance. **All such boasting is evil.**

Man, is the Holy Spirit just nailing us this morning!

- ⊞ **How many times do we make our plans** and speak of the things that we are “going to do”.
- ⊞ **In reality**, here we see that since we don’t really know what is going to happen tomorrow, **by speaking as though we do know what is going to happen tomorrow and boasting of what we are going to do, we are really being very arrogant** and showing that Jesus is not Lord of our entire life.

#### **James 4**

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

**I have people ask me all of the time;**

- ⊞ *“Pastor, is it ok for a Christian to do this or that...?”*
- ⊞ **Just by the fact** that someone asks the question, means that they must have an awareness of whether or not it is right or wrong.

**If we had no awareness of if it was wrong, we would just do it without any thought.**

- ⊞ **If you have to think** about whether or not it is right or wrong, means you already know it is wrong for you.
- ⊞ **Listen to the inner conscience** the Lord put in you, follow it, you will never be wrong.

#### **Romans 1:19-20**

19 because **what may be known of God is manifest in them**, for God has shown it to them.  
20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**,

#### **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also **He has put eternity in their hearts**, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.