

# **James**

## **“A friend of the world”**

**Return Church**

Sunday

February 9, 2025

# The book of James

- James is making a distinction between a mere profession of faith and a possession of faith. Its not enough to say you believe with your head, you need it to play out in your life.
- If you have real faith, it will show itself in a practice of Christian life. Real faith is alive, active, and full of good works.
- James teaches us how to live a life of faith, compassion, integrity and justice.
  1. In chapter 1 we learned to look into the mirror of God's word to see who we are in Christ.
  2. In chapter 2 we learned how important it is to care for and give to the poor. Faith without works is dead.
  3. In chapter 3 we learned how important our speech is. Words matter. We need to learn to control our tongues.
  4. In chapter 4, we see what James means when he says keep yourself unspotted from the world.

# Unspotted from the world

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world. ***James 1:26-27 NKJV***

**The book of James shows that if you are a real Christian, your practice or behaviors will change in 3 areas.**

1. How you treat the poor. (chapter 2)
2. How you use your words or your speech. (chapter 3)
3. How you relate to the worlds systems. (chapters 4 & 5)
  1. **Keep yourself unspotted from the world. (what does that mean?)**

# **Friend of the world - enemy of God**

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. ***James 4:4 NKJV***

God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hand, you sinners; and purify your hearts, *you* double-minded. ***James 4:6-8 NKJV***

**A friend of the world is an enemy of God.**

# The world

*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. **James 4:4 NKJV***

What does being, “a friend of the world mean”?

What is James referring to when he says, “The World”?

# Do not love the world

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. ***1 John 2:15-17***  
***NKJV***

Christians are commanded to love, yes!

But here again, we are also commanded to not love the world.

# The world

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

## Do not love the world:

There are at least 3 different uses for the world in the Bible.

1. **The world** can mean, all the creation, all the created earth and even the entire universe. We should love this.
2. **The world** can mean all the people that inhabit this world that God created. Of course, we are supposed to love all people or mankind.
3. **The world** can also mean the spiritual realm that is in opposition to God and in rebellion to His kingdom. This is what James 4 and I John 2 is referring to. The ideological system that is anti-Christ, that is Satanic.

# The world

- The world is; the spiritual and ideological system of the devil, that is at war with God, that is an enemy of God. The culture that we live in that is in opposition to God. The fallen man-centered system or way of life.
- The world here, refers to a system of values and priorities that are opposed to God, often characterized by worldly desires, pride, and materialism, essentially representing a lifestyle focused on earthly things rather than spiritual things.
- The world here is typically understood as a negative force that pulls people away from God.
- Loving the world is idolatry. So, while we are commanded to love the *people* of the world, we are to be wary of anything that competes with God for our highest affections.



# The world

When we are told *not* to love the world, the Bible is also referring to the world's corrupt value system. Satan is the god of this world, and he has his own value system contrary to God's. In 1 John 2 we see the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Every sin imaginable can be summed up in those three evils.

The world often applauds sin. Hollywood encourages us to envy sinners and to foolishly compare ourselves with the "beautiful people." Advertisers prey on our natural tendency to love this world, and most marketing campaigns appeal in some way to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life.

# The world

For God so loved **the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ***John 3:16 NKJV***

- Here we see that God loved the world, but he is talking about the people of the world.
- James says, “Do not love the world”. What does this mean?
- Do not love is a command. So, some kinds of love can be sinful.
- We live in a world, or a culture that needs to hear that from us.
- Everyone says, God is love, therefore we should love everybody. How can you be against love? What does it mean to not love the world.
- What could possibly make love sinful?
- Love becomes sinful when it is directed at the wrong object.

# Love God, Love people

..for God is love. *I John 4:8 NKJV*

We love Him because He first loved us. *I John 4:19 NKJV*

Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This *is* the first commandment. And the second, like *it*, *is* this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. *Mark 12:29-31 NKJV*

# Love one another

There are many commands in the Bible for us to love one another. In fact, this is how the world knows we are Christians, by our love for one another. Christians even love their enemies.

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet, and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law. ***Romans 13:8-10 NKJV***

# The world

- We see that we are to love the people of the world, but not to love the world.
- God loves the sinner, but He hates the sin.
- We must constantly examine our hearts for the presence of this love of the world. We all must fight worldliness.
- Remember, a friend of the world is an enemy of God.
- Some say:  
**“Don’t drink, smoke, cuss or chew, or date the girls that do”.**
- It’s a little more complex than that.

# 7 things the Lord hates

We all need to love what God loves and hate what God hates.

These six *things* the Lord hates, yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness *who* speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

***Proverbs 6:16-19 NKJV***

God loves the sinner, but He hates the sin.

# The world

The world is something believers need to overcome:

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ***1 John 5:4 NKJV***

When your love is pointed toward the world there is no room for the love of God in your heart, because it is pointed toward that which opposes God. So, love can become sinful when pointed at the wrong object.

Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ***James 4:4 NKJV***

# Values

When we are saved, we are taken out of the world. We transfer kingdoms, we transfer our allegiances. We are removed from the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of light.

We now have a new leader, Jesus Christ, and we are to value what He values, love what He loves and hate what He hates.

If you love the world, it will push the love of God out of your heart.



# **In the world, but not of the world**

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ***John 17:14-18 NKJV***

**We are in the world but not of this world.**

God doesn't want you to be a hermit and go and live in a cave. God sends us into the world, to help others. But we are to convert them and don't let them convert you.

# **Can you be friends with worldly people?**

As Christians, we constantly face temptations and the attacks of the world around us. Everything we see, read, do, and hear affects us somehow. That's why, to maintain a close relationship with God, we have to let go of our old sinful ways. We need to be very careful about what we watch on TV, the music we listen to, the activities we participate in, and the people we spend our time with.

Being friends with worldly people is for the mature and strong Christian. You need to be converting them, not allowing them to convert you. If you are a new Christian, you must be extremely careful of who you associate with.

# Choose your friends carefully

The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. ***Proverbs 12:26 NKJV***

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. ***Proverbs 13:20 NLT***

Don't befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul. ***Proverbs 22:24-25 NLT***

# Don't be unequally yoked

Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? ***II Corinthians 6:14-15 NLT***

It is good to try and evangelize the lost sinners. Jesus ate with sinners. But you are not Jesus. Don't get so close to an unbeliever that their ways and their values actually start rubbing off on you.

You need to try to convert them, don't let them convert you.

# The love of the world

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. ***1 John 2:16 NKJV***

## What does it mean to love the world?

1. **Lust of the flesh:** Cravings, gluttony, drunkenness, sexual immorality.
2. **Lust of the eyes:** Lustful sinful desires, covetousness, greed.
3. **Pride of life:** Boasting, pride in all its many forms.

Lust, a desire. Lust is not wanting bad things, but rather wanting things badly.

# One foot in the world, one foot in God

- Lots of people are unhappy, because they have one foot in the world and one foot in God.
- My old mentor use to say, “most Christians have just enough of Jesus to make themselves miserable.”
- Many Christians have **just enough of Christ where they can't enjoy the world and just enough of the world where they can't enjoy Christ.**
- Many people get sober, but then they enter into an ungodly relationship, and this sets them on a course to backslide, and to return back to their addiction once again.
- You need to turn your back to the world. Let me try to be specific here. What is the conflict between God and the world?

# Sex

## The world says:

- You can have sex with whoever you want, whenever you want and in anyway you want.
- Adultery, fornication, and homosexuality, are all ok.
- I am just wanting to be loved. Doesn't God want me to be happy?
- I don't want to give up my sin. So, I'll find a church that accepts me just the way that I am, and tolerates my sin, so I can continue in my sin.
- Anybody that preaches against freedom of sexuality must be a hater of people.

## God says:

- Marry a wife and be faithful to her. Have a monogamous relationship.
- Be the husband of one wife, or the wife of one husband.
- Jesus said if you lust after a woman, you have already committed adultery in your heart.
- But the....sexually immoral, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. **Revelation 21:8 NKJV**
- Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, ..... that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV**

# **Your passions and desires**

- “The world” is openly opposed to God and His truth.
- This system of the world has infiltrated the church and is being urged along by many church leaders, who are arguing that any and all types of love is always righteous and godly, because God loves everyone and everything.
- But the Bible says “do not love the world”.
- Meaning, there are some loves that are out of bounds and unacceptable.
- Do not love based upon your fleshly passions and desires. Love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. Your passions desires should be turned toward God.



# Money

## The world says:

- You deserve more.
- Keep up with the Jones'.
- You should be successful.
- He who has the most toys wins.
- Money will make you happy and secure.
- Use your money on yourself, buy more comfort.
- Your net worth determines your self-worth.
- Hollywood and all of its advertisements appeal to this desire for more.
- Most people think thou shalt not covet is a suggestion and not a commandment.

## God says:

- Be content with what you have. In fact, the Bible says be content with food and clothing.
- The love of money is the root of all evil.
- Hardly shall a rich man inherit the kingdom of God.
- Materialism and greed are sinful.
- You should pray about how much should you spend on comfort?
- You should use your money to help the poor.
- What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul.
- No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. **Matthew 6:24 ESV**

# **The world is infused into our culture**

What kind of music do you listen to. Does it glorify God? Does it stir your interest and passions toward God or the world? Rock n roll, country, blues, pop, etc... all of it has a central message to pull you away from God and toward the world.

What do you watch on Television? What does Hollywood want you to watch? Lust of the flesh, Lust of the eyes, the pride of life. Can you not see Hollywood trying to push and sell the influence of the world in everything they do?

# **The pride of life**

- Pride is the root of all our sinful behavior.
- Pride is self-centered, selfish, self-absorbed and self-righteous.
- Pride is independence from God.
- Pride is you playing god. Pride says, I'll be my own god.
- Pride is the source of anger.
- Pride is the source of all sexual sins.
- Pride is the source of materialistic and covetous sins.
- The entire system of "the world" plays into the hands of the pride of life that lives in every human heart to some degree.

# Pride

- I was 27 years old before I ever realized that pride was sinful.
- Once I saw that I had been trying to be the god of my own life, and I saw how sinful it was in God's eyes, I began to repent. This changed my life.
- I had been trying to rule and boss my own life, I was happy when things went my way and sad and angry when they didn't go my way.
- It was 1988 when I began to repent of this, and this is when I had my great experience with God and His amazing grace.

# How do we get better?

- How do we stop loving the world?
- You must fall in love with something better than the world. The world is temporal, you need to fall in love with something eternal. Fall in love with your creator and redeemer, Jesus Christ.
- The way to stop loving the world, is to start loving Jesus.
- How do we start to love him?

*We love Him because He first loved us. | John 4:19 NKJV*

# **Look what Jesus has done for us**

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ***Romans 5:8 NLT***

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. ***1 John 4:9-10 NLT***

**Repent, confess your sins, and call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and He will forgive you of your sins.**

# The Gospel

- This is the best news you will ever hear.
- God loved you so much that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth. He came as a human being. Born of a virgin and born into poverty.
- He lived an absolutely perfect, sinless life as He fulfilled the law of God. Then He willingly went to the cross to pay the price for our sins.
- He was our substitute; He died in our place. We deserved death and condemnation, He did not deserve this, but He swapped places with us as He was nailed to that cross.
- Then the wrath and holy anger of the Heavenly Father was poured out upon Him as all the sins of mankind were placed upon Him.
- He uttered on the cross, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Wow! That is love. He loved us first.

# **Submit to God, resist the devil**

God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hand, you sinners; and purify your hearts, *you double-minded. James 4:6-8 NKJV*

**Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.**

Entering into a relationship with God is not like a business partnership. It is falling in love. It is entering into a love relationship.



# Invitation

God is inviting you, He is wooing you, He is drawing you to Himself. He is calling out your name and asking you if you want a love relationship with Him. You can fall in love with the creator of the universe. You can have a personal relationship with God Himself. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

God is wanting a personal relationship with us all.

Be a friend of God and you won't be a friend of the world anymore.

# **Trade the world for Jesus**

If you can make Jesus your friend and the lover of your soul, you won't allow yourself to become a friend of the world.

He is not just saying be good, be nice, be moral, he is saying, look at what Jesus has done for you until it melts you into something else or until it changes you.

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

Look at Jesus, take Him into your heart.

# **I have decided to follow Jesus**

I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
No turning back, no turning back.

Tho' none go with me, I still will follow,  
Tho' none go with me I still will follow,  
Tho' none go with me, I still will follow;  
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me,  
The world behind me, the cross before me;  
The world behind me, the cross before me;  
No turning back, no turning back.