

Finished The 2nd Major Section Of James, ~ Consisting Of 4 Mini-Essays In Proverb Form, ~ 2:1-3:18.

Favoritism, ~ Faith & Works, ~ Controlling what we say, ~ & Godly vs worldly wisdom.

Recall, ~ James Is The Only NT Book ~ That Falls Into The Form Known As ~ Wisdom Literature.

It is arranged mainly ~ into small units ~ but contains ~ some larger proverb clusters on a common theme.

▶▶ Even though the book begins like a letter, ~ the rest of the book ~ ¶¶

▷▷ does not have the format of a letter ~ but rather ~ that of a collection ~ of wisdom sayings.

Today We Begin next major section, ~ 4:1-12.

Recall, ~ the 1st major section, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ 1:1-27, ~ collection of ¶s ~ covering wide range of subjects.

▶▶ This section = same. ⇒⇒ Namely, ~ a collection of ¶s ~ covering variety of subjects.

Like the 1st major section ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the format of 4:1-12 ~ does not have the logical flow of an essay, ~ with a continuous line of argument. 1/14

▶▶ And like before, ~ we'll be taking the subjects ~ as James presents them.

4:1-12 ~ Covers 4 subjects.

▶▶ Conflict in the Congregation, ~ 1-3. ~ Spiritual adultery, ~ 4-6. ~ ~ 77

▷▷ Submission to God, ~ 7-10. ~ & Slander, ~ 11-12.

Keep James' overall purpose in mind.

▶▶ And i.e., ~ to instill correct thinking & right behavior in believers.

This A.M., ~ Conflict In Congregation, ~ 4:1-3.

The ref to peace in 3:18 ~ makes way for a discussion of conflict.

▶▶ Here James makes ~ a passionate appeal ~ 77

▷▷ for believers to examine the reality and origin ~ of conflicts that arise among us.

Begins With Ques, ~ 1a (NIV), ~ ~ What causes fights and quarrels among you?

Notice the ques does not ask here.

▶▶ If you ever have conflict in the congregation, ~ what was the cause?

▷▷ Doesn't entertain that ~ if ~ thought.

▶▶ Dose of realism. 2/14

▷▷ Implies conflicts will arise at times in a congregation.

▷▷ Where two or more gather together, ~ there will eventually be conflict.

↪↪ Because of our remaining sin nature, ~ even Christians ~ will inevitably sin against one another.

① ⇔⇔ Euodia & Syntyche ② ⇔⇔ Corinth

Grk wds = warlike terms.

▶▶ Shows how brutal church fights can be.

2 observations here ~ from previous discussion of wisdom.

▶▶ 1st, ~ since peace-loving is a trait ~ of those who possess godly wisdom, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ for sure ~ conflicts in the congregation ~ do not spring from godly wisdom.

▶▶ And 2nd, ~ conflicts in a church ~ are an e.g. ~ ¶¶

▷▷ of the disorder caused by worldly wisdom.

And 1 observation from James's discussion on controlling what we say.

▶▶ Since disputes of this sort ~ are almost always accompanied by ~ ¶¶

▷▷ harsh words, ~ criticism, ~ and slander, ~ verbal disputes are a blatant misuse ~ of the tongue. 3/14

Plus, ~ given that this is referring to conflict among believers ~ 77

▶▶we see that verbal disputes are an example ~ of praising God and cursing people.

▷▷James 3:10, ~ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

(1a, NIV) What causes fights and quarrels among you?

▶▶When 1st hear ~ think of individuals and situations causing conflict in a church.

▷▷But James gets to the heart of the matter.

Vs 1b (NIV), ~ Don't They Come From Your Desires That Battle Within You?

Here James provides the answer ~ by way of a question ~ that expects a yes ans.

▶▶Not external but internal.

▷▷And his ques is worded in a way ~ that forces us to admit the truth.

↪↪Not let us play ~ the blame others game.

→→He presses us ~ to examine ourselves ~ as the cause of conflicts.

3rd Time not external but internal.

▶▶1:13-15 4/14

▶▶ 3:14a, ~ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts.

▷▷ The phrase reminds us ~ that our sin problem ~ is not ~ external ~ but ~ internal.

↪↪ It's not someone else's fault, ~ when we have ~ bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in our hearts.

▶▶ & now 4:1b.

▷▷ Vs 1b (NIV), ~ Don't They Come From Your Desires That Battle Within You?

▷▷ Internal not external.

(1a-b, NIV) What causes fights and quarrels among you? ~ Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

▶▶ Desires here refers to ~ sinful, self-centered ~ desires.

▷▷ Desires that are sinful and totally preoccupied with one's own concerns.

Notice, ~ our sinful, self-centered desires ~ are at war within us.

▶▶ As long as we still have our sin nature, ~ this internal battle will continue on a daily basis.

▷▷ All-out war.

▶▶ Gal. 5:16-17

▶▶ We recently read what Paul wrote about his internal struggle with his old nature. 5/14

▶▶Peter acknowledged this problem and exhorted us to abstain from sinful desires.

▷▷I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

▷▷Peter personifies ~ the strong evil desires of our corrupt nature.

↪↪The evil desires of our sin nature ~ are like an enemy army ~ 77

→→that is waging a military campaign against us, ~ in order to enslave us and make us useless to God.

↪↪Trying to drag us back.

▶▶Likewise, ~ James personifies ~ our sinful, self-centered desires ~ 77

▷▷as soldiers carrying on a military campaign ~ aimed at securing the satisfaction of their desires.

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among believers?

▶▶Our sinful, self-centered desires ~ which wage war ~ within us.

▷▷But how ~ does this battle within us ~ cause conflict in the church?

James shows us in 2.

And i.e., ~ unchecked sinful, self-centered desires at war within ~ cause war without.

▶▶TPID, ~ the battle within ~ if left to fester, ~ does not stay within. 6/14

▶▶It manifests itself outwardly ~ in ugly ways.

▷▷Ugly ways ~ that can wreak havoc ~ w/in a church.

▶▶In brief, ~ the war w/in, ~ left unchecked, ~ causes war without.

But James doesn't paint with broad strokes.

▶▶Illustrates one ugly way.

▷▷And through his specific illustration ~ we see his general point that ~ 77

↳↳the war within, ~ if left unchecked, ~ causes war without.

▶▶He narrows the focus to ~ resentment and envy ~ over what other believers have.

▷▷IOW, ~ he's talking about when our sin nature nudges us ~ to contrast ~ 77

↳↳what we ~ don't have ~ with what other believers ~ have.

▷▷E.g., ~ could be others' ~ belongings, ~ status, ~ relationships, ~ or influence.

▶▶And James shows us ~ the natural result ~ when we allow the temptation to fester.

▷▷Vs 2a, ~ You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

1st part of 2a, ~ You desire and do not have, so you murder. 7/14

▶▶It is difficult to believe ~ that James's readers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷whom he elsewhere addresses ~ as beloved brothers and sisters, ~ were actually guilty of murder.

▶▶Besides, ~ for such murders ~ the criminals would have been executed by the secular government.

▶▶It seems best ~ to hold that James used the term figuratively.

▷▷More spec. ~ hyperbole. ⇨⇨ Jesus

▶▶Phrase, ~ you murder ~ could be taken as hyperbole for resentment.

▷▷You desire and do not have, so you are filled with resentment toward your fellow believers.

↪↪Implication.

→→These are ~ sinful, self-centered desires ~ to have the same things others have.

↪↪You desire ~ but do not have ~ the same things others have, ~ so you are filled with resentment ~ toward your fellow believers.

May have been making a connection ~ to Jesus' teaching.

▶▶There Jesus pointed out that ~ continuing resentment against a brother or sister

▷▷could be considered murder.

↪↪Matt. 5:21-22 8/14

▶▶ The relationship between ~ James ~ and Jesus' sermon on the mount.

▷▷ Many parallelisms exist ~ between ~ James' letter ~ and the Sermon on the Mount.

John also has a similar teaching.

▶▶ 1 John 3:15a, ~ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer.

Hatred and continuing resentment = same moral category ~ as murder.

Recall James 2:10-11

▶▶ To violate God's royal law ~ on any level ~ is a serious matter.

▶▶ No sin is ~ to be taken lightly ~ or ~ to be treated in a flippant manner.

▶▶ In God's eyes, ~ there is no such thing ~ as a minor or insignificant sin.

Back to James and the 1st pt of 2a.

▶▶ You desire ~ but do not have the same things others have, ~ so you are filled with resentment toward them.

▶▶ Why not just say resentment?

▷▷ No doubt ~ because James is making the same point.

▷▷ He wants to shock us ~ into reality. 9/14

▷▷ No sin is ~ to be taken lightly ~ or ~ to be treated in a flippant manner.

▷▷ In God's eyes, ~ resentment is just as bad as murder.

▶▶ Also no doubt ~ he is emphasizing this resentment.

▷▷ As noted, ~ **you murder** ~ could be taken as hyperbole for resentment.

↪↪ Filled with resentment.

So the sense behind the 1st pt of 2a is most likely this.

▶▶ You desire ~ but do not have ~ the things that others have, ~~ so you are filled with resentment toward them.

Latter pt of 2a.

▶▶ You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

▷▷ Covet = filled with envy.

▶▶ You are filled with envy of what others have ~ and you cannot obtain these things, ~ so you fight and quarrel.

To sum up.

▶▶ How do ~ the sinful, self-centered desires battling within us ~ cause conflict in the church?

▷▷ Unchecked sinful, self-centered desires at war within ~ cause war without. 10/14

▶▶ The battle within ~ if left to fester, ~ does not stay within.

▷▷ It manifests itself outwardly ~ in ugly ways.

▶▶ This is one of the reasons ~ it's so incredibly important to heed Peter's exhortation.

▷▷ I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul (1 Pet. 2:11).

▶▶ Paul's exhortation in Rom. 6:12-14 applies here as well.

In 2b-3, ~ Notes Why They Don't Have What They Desire.

In 4:2b, ~ James rebukes these quarreling Christians for ~ ¶¶

▶▶resenting, ~ envying, ~ & fighting with each other ~ instead of going to God in prayer.

▶▶ Indeed, a believer's attitude toward God ~ should be that of a child ~ ¶¶

▷▷ looking to his loving Father for provision.

▶▶ James echoes the teaching of Jesus.

▷▷ Matt. 7:7-11

(2b-3) James has just said ~ that his readers did not have what they desired ~ because they did not ask.

▶▶ In 3, ~ says they did ask, ~ but they did not receive ~ because asked improperly. 11/14

▶▶ The petitions they offered ~ were inseparable from their ~ sinful, self-centered desires.

▶▶ God does not respond with a yes ~ when the petitioner's prayer ~ ❗❗

▷▷ is based on impure motives, ~ such as sinful, self-centered desires.

Apparently the first statement, ~ 2b, ~ you do not ask, ~ was not meant to imply ~ that they did not ask at all.

▶▶ Vs 3 shows they did.

▶▶ No doubt then ~ the implication in 2b is that ~ they did not ask ~ according to God's will.

There Are Some Prayers Of Christians ~ That God Has Not Promised To Answer.

1 Jn. 5:14-15

▶▶ This is an assurance that God hears all prayers.

▶▶ However, ~ he answers prayers ~ according to his will, ~ ❗❗

▷▷ which does not align with ~ sinful, self-centered desires.

John's language here ~ reflects Jesus' teaching ~ in Jn. 16:23-24

▶▶ To pray in Jesus' name ~ is not to use His name as a formula, ~ ❗❗

▷▷ ritualistically tacked onto the end of a prayer to ensure its success. 12/14

▶▶Rather, ~ it is to pray ~ for that which is consistent with Jesus' person and will, ~ and ~ to affirm ~ 77

▷▷one's complete dependence on Him to supply every need, ~ 77

↳↳with the goal ~ that he would be glorified in the answer.

God graciously invites his children ~ to approach him in prayer.

▶▶But there is always ~ the condition, ~ stated or implied, ~ that prayer be ~ according to his will.

▶▶A sinful, self-focused desire ~ to have something so as to ~ match, ~ compete with, ~ 77

▷▷or flauntingly surpass, ~ another believer ~ is not ~ a desire according to God's will.

▶▶God is not a vending machine ~ who dispenses toys indiscriminately to those who ask.

▶▶He is a holy Father ~ who relates to his children so as to promote ~ his ultimate glory ~ 7

▷▷and our good in conforming us to the image of his Son.

James Teaches Us ~ Not To Point Fingers At Others ~ 77

but rather to ask God to lay bare our own hearts.

▶▶When we experience conflict in our congregatoin, ~ we should pray as David prayed.

▷▷Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! 13/14

▶▶If the Holy Spirit reveals ~ sinful, self-centered desires in our hearts, ~ 77

▷▷we should humble ourselves by ~ confessing our sin to God and repenting of it.

▶▶And then rejoice that ~ 77

▷▷If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

▶▶And also rejoice that, ~ if we sin, ~ 77

▷▷we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, ~ who always lives to make intercession for us. 14/14