

**“Spiritual Maturity: Cleansing from Compromise”**

**Intro:**

**OUR TEXT: JAMES 4: 4-5**

- 4** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- 5** Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

**OUR UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD (v. 4a - “adulteresses”)**

The reference is not to physical adultery, but to spiritual adultery.

It is based on the OT idea of Yahweh being the husband and Israel being the bride of God.

*Isaiah 54:5 For your husband is your Maker; whose name is the Lord of hosts.*

*Jeremiah 3:20 Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, declares the Lord.*

“Adulteresses” in v. 4 is in the feminine tense only. Thus, it refers to the “woman” in the relationship – speaking of the church in her relationship to God.

Jesus in the NT speaks often of this “evil and adulterous generation” (Matt. 16:4)

Paul, in his letters, strengthens the analogy by referring to the church as the bride of Christ

*2 Corinthians 11: 2-3 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.*

John, in his book of Revelation refers to the church as the bride to the Lamb, who is Jesus

*Revelation 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”*

**A PRECIOUS PICTURE**

1. To be friendly with the world of sin is like BREAKING THE MARRIGE VOW
2. ALL SIN IS SIN AGAINST LOVE
3. Our relationship with God is not distant (king to subject; master to slave) but INTIMATE like husband and wife

*Proverbs 3: 32 The crooked man is an abomination to the Lord, but He is intimate with the upright.*

4. SIN BREAKS GOD'S HEART like a marriage partner's heart is broken by adultery

### **OUR HOSTILITY TOWARD GOD (v. 4b - "friendship with the world")**

- a. This is not spoken out of contempt for our natural world or the world of people whom God loves

*Genesis 1:31 And God saw all that He had made and behold, it was very good.*

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world . . ."*

- b. This speaks of the Greek "kosmos" – the sinful world at odds with God

*Romans 8: 7-8 The mind set on the flesh [this world] is hostile toward God . . .*

*Those who are in the flesh cannot please God*

*\*1 John 2: 15 Do not love the world, nor 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 and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*

*2 Timothy 4:10 "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me . . ."*

- c. Jesus' teaching on this calls for 100% devotion

*Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.*

Clearly, we can have 2 jobs and serve both well if they are at different times. But we cannot be fully devoted to 2 causes or 2 lovers at once

A man may either use the world, or be used by the world

To use the world to serve God is too friendly with God; to be used by the world is to be an enemy of God

### **GOD'S JEALOUSY FOR US (v. 5)**

This is a difficult verse for two reasons

- (1) It references speaking from Scripture for which there is no known passage that is close to the quotation. So, either it comes from a lost passage, or more likely it summarizes the whole view of Scripture.
- (2) The translation is particularly difficult. In the authorized version it reads "the spirit that dwelleth in us lusted to envy." This would seem to mean a condemnation of the human spirit which is hardly possible, nor makes sense in context. The NIV version (which many of you have) uses the uncapitalized "spirit".

Alternate: James 4:5 Or The spirit which He has made to dwell in us lusts with envy

**The best meaning: The (Holy) Spirit which God has made to dwell within us jealously yearns for the full devotion of our hearts. God is the jealous lover who will tolerate no rival and who will share the human heart with no other love.**

Jealousy can have either a negative or positive connotation. When accompanied with the thought of envy it is negative and something God could not be. However, like the husband who is understandably jealous for the faithful love of his wife, God can be understandably jealous.

The OT often speaks of God's jealousy in this way. Moses said of God to the people:

*Deuteronomy 32:16 They made Him jealous with strange gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger.*

Then God says: *Deuteronomy 32:21 They have made me jealous with what is not God*

Remember, in the 10 Commandments God says, *"I am a jealous God" (Exodus 20:10)*

"Jealous" comes from the Greek word "zelos" from which we get the word "zealot" – and it has the idea of the burning heat of passion. The idea is that God loves mankind with such a passion that He cannot bear any rival love within the hearts of men.

It is profoundly true that a man can only be in love with one person at the same time. If he thinks otherwise he does not know the meaning of love.

## **THE CLEANSING OF COMPROMISE**

**There is one word that summarizes the sin that James speaks of in these verses – the sin from which we need to be cleansed: COMPROMISE**

Compromise in English comes from 2 words – the prefix "com" and "promise".

"Com" indicates between 2 parties such as "commerce" or "commute." It means the dividing between the two. So, "Compromise" means the dividing of promise between two.

Compromise can have a positive or negative connotation.

Positively, it can mean a negotiation between two parties with mutual benefit and understanding.

But especially in our country, the compromise of negotiation implies a coming to agreement, but with give and take for both parties – neither getting the full benefit as before compromise.

This is the meaning here – GOD DOES NOT ALLOW COMPROMISE WHEN IT COMES TO DEVOTION TO HIM.

FR Chorus: No room for compromise – the road is narrow, the hour is late

Lay down your alibis and follow Him today!

Ex: COMPARTMENTALIZING YOUR LIFE – ok normally, but NOT WITH GOD

God does not want as much of us as He can get. He demands all of us.

He is a jealous God, knowing that devotion to another amount to idolatry.

WE NEED TO BE CLEANED FROM COMPROMISE.

In Revelation 3, John is writing to the church at Laodicea and writes that God says this to them:

*Revelation 3: 15-16 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.*

**The answer? – in v. 6 “but He [God] gives a greater grace”**

### **JAMES 4: 3-4 (My Paraphrase)**

4. Don't you realize that you are committing spiritual adultery against God when you compromise your allegiance with this sinful world? To do so is an act of aggression – rebuking His love and making Him your enemy.

5. God's Word means it big time when it warns that God is like a jealous husband longing for His Holy Spirit to have our full devotion.

### **JAMES, Chapter 1 (My Paraphrase)**

1. To my Jewish brothers of all twelve tribes, wherever you might be after having been forced out of your homeland – this letter is from James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, by calling and by choice. Dear brothers:

#### **Confidence in Trials**

2-4. Take a different perspective at the many trials you face, seeing the positive in them, rather than the negative. One, your faith is being proven and strengthened.

And two, you are

But is not an academic lesson, but is profoundly PRACTICAL – teaching us the “how to” in making Godly DECISIONS.

WISDOM is not the ability to understand circumstances - God may or may not reveal the “why” of why developing endurance for the long haul of life. Don't balk at being tested, but hang in there, letting the tests accomplish their Godly purpose: your maturity, that you may be spiritually “buff” without flabbiness or weakness of character.

5. Remember, if you need wisdom (and who doesn't?), just ask God, who gives it abundantly and without making you feel bad for asking. Just ask, and Godly wisdom will indeed be given to you.

6-8. But you have to ask really believing the answer will come. No doubting allowed! Because if you doubt, you are acting just like the waves of the sea blown around by the wind – up one minute with your belief and down the next with your doubts. This kind of supposed “faith” won’t get you anything from God. He doesn’t accept on-again, off-again faith, which by the way, indicates instability in other areas of life.

### **Confidence in Status**

9-10. Hey, believing brother - how about this for God’s “upside down” perspective on wisdom? If your earthly status is on the “humble” side, be proud that you are standing rich and tall in God’s spiritual kingdom. And if your earthly status is on the “well off” side, be proud that in God’s kingdom you are just a spiritual beggar. After all, your earthly status is about as secure as flowering grass in the heat of the sun.

11. See the picture? Just like the sun rises, so does your status. Then comes the “Santa Annas” of life – and just like the grass withers and the flower falls, so does your status wither and fall. What once appeared beautiful is no more. Our status, and the futile pursuits of achieving it, will soon fade away.

12. So what’s worth achieving? - persevering through the trials of life and proving your Godly character through it all. This is how you will receive the true “crown of life” – God’s heavenly reward – which He promises to each one of His lovers.

### **Confidence in Temptation**

13-16. I don’t ever want to hear you saying, “I am being tempted by God.” One, evil can never tempt a perfect God. And two, a perfect God could never lower Himself to tempt any one. Rather, it’s really you that brings on temptation by your own luring lustfulness. Sin comes when you give in to temptation by acting on your lust. And when that sin gets full sway in your life it kills your relationship with God. My dear, believing friends whom I love - don’t be sucked in by temptation!

17. Everything that is good is a perfect gift, especially given to you from God. “Good” is never by accident. The Giver is always our Heavenly Father, and like a bright light he never wavers or compromises in His delivery of good.

18. God exercised His Divine prerogative when He chose to pull us into truth by the power of His Word. This was so that we Jewish believers could be considered as the first ones to receive His special blessing of spiritual victory.

### **Confidence in Reactions**

19-20. Now I’m going to tell you something you already know, but you must apply it to your reactions. One, be quick to listen to others and especially to God. Two, be slow to voice your opinion. And three, put any tendency to anger on a slow fuse. Pleasing God and getting angry never go well together. The short version: open your ears, close your mouth and chill your anger.

21. You know all that leftover filth of the old life that’s still seeps out? Dump it in the spiritual trash can. You know God’s Word that He has planted deep inside of you? Humbly receive its wisdom and let it save you from drowning in your own foolish reactions.

## **Confidence in Religion**

22. It is delusional to think that you are religious by merely hearing the Word, believing it, and participating in a few religious activities. Rather, you prove and demonstrate your true religion by living out the Word actively in every area of your life.

23-24. Hearing the Word and not doing it is like looking at yourself in a mirror and not fixing what needs fixing. Why even look if you just go away unchanged and oblivious to the need?

25. God's Word is the perfect rulebook for life, with rules to set you free, not tie you down, and therefore worthy of a long and hard look. If you let them sink in, and turn your thinking into meaningful action and change, your life will surely be blessed for it.

26. Do you think that your religion is healthy? Then put it to the test by whether you can control your tongue. If you can't, not only is your religion worthless but you're deceiving yourself into thinking your religion is OK. It's not.

27. I'll tell you what real religion is about. It's about practicing love and care for those with special needs – like children without parents or women who have lost their husbands. Bottom line, true religion is keeping yourself pure from the wickedness of the world!

## **JAMES, Chapter 2 (My Paraphrase)**

### **Conviction in Equality**

1. Don't you dare call yourself a believer in our amazing Lord and Chosen One, Jesus, if you treat people differently based on their appearance or background.

2-4. Here's a test. If one person walks into to your church service looking like "a million" and another comes in looking like a "bum," will you treat them the same? Or will you give special attention or seating to the one looking great and ignore the other, even making him or her sit in a place where they might not so easily draw attention. If you'd honestly treat them differently, you fail the test. You would be making an ungodly judgment based on unfair distinctions.

5-7. As my brothers in the Lord, I really do love you. So, listen up. Don't we read that God so often has chosen the poor in wealth to be rich in faith and receive His kingdom inheritance? This is exactly what God promises to all who love Him. It doesn't make sense to dishonor the poor person. More often than not, it's the rich one who will give you a hard time, even pulling you into court or using your precious Lord's name in vain.

8-9. The highest law of God's kingdom is this: "Love others as you would want to be loved." If you do this, you're right on. But if you love people differently based on externals, you're practicing sin and guilty of breaking God's #1 law.

10-11. Here's the hard fact. Even if you were to keep all of God's law perfectly, one sin (like favoritism) makes you guilty of all in God's eyes. God forbids adultery, just

like he forbids murder. But if you are clean regarding adultery, yet commit murder – you’re guilty of adultery, and all the other laws as well. Ouch!

12-13. Now don’t be frozen with fear in your words and actions toward others – God’s royal law of love is meant to motivate and free you, not condemn you. If you show no mercy, then mercy won’t come your way. But if you learn to show mercy in your assessment of others, that demonstration of mercy will trump any judgment that is due you.

### **Conviction in Works**

14. Tell me, fellow Christians, what is “saving faith?” If someone claims to be a Christian by their faith, and yet there is little visible sign of that faith in their actions, it seems to me that kind of faith is useless faith – not “saving faith.”

15-16. For example, if a believing brother lacks some basic necessity such as clothing or food and you essentially tell him “blessings on you, I hope you’ll be okay!” and don’t make an effort to meet his need, I say your supposed faith is a sham.

17. The principle is this: Faith, if it isn’t backed up by action, is dead faith.

18. Now, I can just hear someone say, “Some Christians are more private, and some are more outgoing in expressing their faith.” Well, if you’re one of those “private in your faith” types, I dare you to prove your faith without any action, while I prove my faith to others by living it out in action.

19-20. You believe that God is one? That’s good, but think of this: the demons, as they shudder, believe the same (and they’re not believers!). Can’t you admit that believing alone without actions to back it up means nothing?

21-23 After all, haven’t we heard Father Abraham was “justified by faith” when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? His faith and works “teamed up” so that his behavior proved his belief to be authentic. This was the fulfillment of the Scripture that says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” Remember, this faith matched with action resulted in Abraham being called the friend of God.

24. So here’s the principle said another way: A man is made right with God by action that demonstrates inward faith, and not by action less faith.

25. Another example would be Rahab, who was once a harlot. But she too was justified, (that is, made right with God) by her works. Remember, she received and hid the spies (Joshua and Caleb) and then let them exit by a safe way.

26. To say the principle a final way: Just like a body without a spirit is lifeless, so also faith without demonstrative action is lifeless.

## **JAMES, Chapter 3 (My Paraphrase)**

### **Control of Giftedness**

1-2. Think long and hard about whether God has called you to be a teacher of His Holy Word. Why? First of all, God will give teachers a stricter judgment when it

comes to handling His Word. Secondly, we are all sinners. (And this implies that a teacher will be rightly held to a higher standard by his students, as well.) And thirdly, since teaching uses a lot of words and many words lead to certain stumbling, a teacher will never be perfect in his teaching.

### **Control of Tongue**