

## 22S31 James 4:1-10 (Part 8) Pride vs Humility

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are beginning our study of James with James 4:1-10 (Part 8) Pride vs Humility

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing short letter from James. Who was James? Historians are not sure. Many believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus or even another early Church leader. Most believe this is the same James that appears in the book of Acts and was the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts Chapter 15. We don't know the exact date it was written but there are indications that this was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but we really don't know. The best guess is 50-60AD. Which would make this one of the earliest New Testament letters. James was writing to Hebrew believers scattered among the nations who are facing many trials and persecution. The main theme in this letter is patient perseverance in the midst of the trouble of life. James is encouraging his readers to actively live what they have learned in Christ. He has strong messages about various sins but includes pride, hypocrisy, favoritism, and slander.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read James 4:1-10 (NAS) *<sup>1</sup>What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not your pleasures that wage war in your body's parts? <sup>2</sup>You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend what you request on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup>You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, "He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us"? <sup>6</sup>But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." <sup>7</sup>Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Be miserable, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

**Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from James, help us see what James wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, James 4:1-2a (NAS) *<sup>1</sup>What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not your pleasures that wage war in*

*your body's parts? <sup>2</sup>You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.* James asks a very good question. Why do we fight with each other? Well it is usually about our selfish desires. James says our bodily lusts. We are envious, so we fight and quarrel.

Let's read on, James 4:2b-3 (NAS). *You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend what you request on your pleasures.* What do you think? We don't get because we don't ask and what we ask for we don't get because we ask with the wrong motives. God knows that we are selfish. When our motives are wrong, God knows we would misuse the things we ask for. But when we align our will with God's will, then we get what we ask for because we only ask for things that God wants us to have.

Then James says in James 4:4 (NAS), *<sup>4</sup>You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.* Wow, did you hear that. There are only two choices, God's side or something else. Friend of the world or friend of God. Not much to interpret about this. We have to choose.

Then James says in James 4:5-6 (NAS) *<sup>5</sup>Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, "He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us"? <sup>6</sup>But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."* James is stating another fact here. All of us struggle with the sin of pride. When God wants us to have a humble spirit. Modern language might say something like "give people slack" or "give them a break" We mean recognize everyone has flaws, but as a Christian I love others the way Jesus loves them. I make them more important than our selves. Out with the selfishness and in with the selflessness.

But then James brings us back to a positive place in James 4:7 (NAS) *<sup>7</sup>Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you* This is a promise from God. If we submit our lives to God and resist the devil, then the devil will flee from us. The devil has no power over us as followers of Jesus. God is in total control

But then James brings us back to a positive place in James 4:8-10 (NAS) *<sup>8</sup>Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Be miserable, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.* James is reminding us there are two ways to live. With God or without God. God is in control or we live in chaos. Be humble toward God and other people, and God will exalt you

Let's review.

- 1) Why fight? Why do we fight with other people? Well selfishness. The Me in me, wants me to do better than others, be blessed more. More, More for me, me. Our selfishness is the at the root of every fight. It's all about me and I'm willing to

fight for that because I deserve it. And that is simply not true. But if we follow the “way” and put Jesus first and everything else second. In fact we put Jesus first and everyone else second before ourselves who must be last. Then and only then are we following Jesus the way Jesus wants and told us to.

- 2) Friend or foe? I hope we heard what James told us. There are only two options. You are either with Jesus or you are not. You can't be both. If you are worried about what other people think of you. Worried about how the people you don't even know think of you. That's being worried about the world, this is trying to be a friend of the world. The problem is you cannot be a friend of the world and a friend of Christ. It is a choice. Jesus or someone or something else. Jesus demands our full devotion. So again, you are either with Jesus or you are not.
- 3) Humble? Humble most people hate this word, it's meaning, the very concept of Humble. You can't be humble and be worried about what is in it for you. God is God and we are not. We need to remember that. God can do whatever He wills to do, we cannot. In this life we face troubles. We can choose to follow Jesus and let Him be in charge. When we do this, we live a peace no matter how chaotic our lives are. Or we can do it our way and struggle and struggle. And what's even worse we are not friends of God. And that does not sound very good to me.

**Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from James. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen**

Let me leave you with this, James is making a great point. No matter who you are or who you think you are. There are only two choices in this life. Jesus or something else. When we choose Jesus, we get help making decision, we have someone helping us carry the burdens of life, we simply live a better life. God truly knows what is best for us. But we can choose something else, riches, fame, popularity, a job, a degree, a family. These things can be good but if they are put first in front of God, then they are bad. Bad because they can destroy our relationships, give rise to jealousy and envy. Bitterness and strife. Another word would be conflict. When we are selfish, we will have conflict with other selfish people. But when we humble ourselves unto the Lord, we let God worry about those things. We focus on Jesus and what He wants us to do. We live the better life now that Jesus promises. Abundantly happy life of service to our king, king Jesus.

Thank you for joining me for our study of James. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.