

A Humble Soul **James 4:1-12**

0.0 Introduction

0.1 An insight from two dissimilar persons:

- Woody Allen: “The heart wants what the heart wants; there’s no logic to those things”
- St. Augustine: “What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies”

0.2 This part of James’ letter is about where your heart (inner self) lies: a spectrum –

- between what is worldly and what is godly (e.g. 4:4)
- hence one’s tendencies ranging from fighting/bitterness to humility/godlikeness

0.3 One cannot love in opposite directions simultaneously (Matt.6:24 // 1:8)

1.0 A Heart of Bitterness

1.1 “Pleasures” and “lusts” (vv.1-2) represent desires (for anything) run rampant with two insights from Tim Keller (*Counterfeit Gods*)

1.2 Consider surface idols and their deep origins:

- “quarrels & conflicts” (vv.1-2) < pride, power, reputation
- “criticism, judgmentalism” (vv.11-12) < feelings of superiority, contempt

1.3 Two kinds of judgment: discernment (Jn.7:24) vs. judgmentalism (vv.11-12; Matt.7:1)

1.4 God’s concern with motives (v.3) // whole drift of Sermon on Mount

2.0 A Heart for God

2.1 We love in different ways, and by degrees and along stages

2.2 God’s people, despite selfish spirit (v.5) experience greater grace (v.6 // Jn.1:16)

2.3 Submission (v.7) and approach (v.8): experience the reciprocation (v.8b)

2.4 Sorrow & humility (vv.9-10) reflect contrite spirit: God’s loves this (Ps.51:17)

2.5 Fruit of these inner developments → brotherly respect

3.0 The Practice of These Things Now

3.1 Humble yourself; draw near to God; make room for grace to flourish.

3.2 Pursue peace with others.

Next week (March 28) – No Presumptions
James 4:13-16; I Tim.6:6-10

James 4:1-12 (NASB)

Things to Avoid

4 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not your pleasures that wage war in your body's parts? ² 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. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend *what you request* on your pleasures. ⁴ 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. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, "He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us"? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." ⁷ Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners; and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be miserable, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

¹¹ Do not speak against one another, brothers *and sisters*. The one who speaks against a brother *or sister*, or judges his brother *or sister*, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*. ¹² There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?