

James – Chapter Four

Although there is a chapter break here, it is important to remember that James has just finished a section on the two types of wisdom each Christians has developed to deal with others. There is a wisdom that we have developed from this world that is dangerous and must be removed. There is also a wisdom that God has sent down from above, wherein He wants us to grow and become proficient. We all deal with people from one of these two perspectives.

The Holy Spirit is now building on the previous section. We move from the emotions and attitudes of the wisdom from below which is of this earth, proceeding from the soul of fleshly man and which aligns us with the demons and not God. If there are quarrels and conflicts in the lives of God's people, He wants us to reflect on where they come from. When husbands and wives are not getting along, when parents and children are not quarreling, and brethren are fighting, what is the source and reason? Can such things occur when the wisdom from above is being used? Do they proceed from the earthly, natural, demonic wisdom from beneath, or are they from the first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy wisdom from above?

With all the commands and examples in the Scriptures on human relationships and how to properly deal with all the strains and stresses of human relationships, if people would do all of these things, we would greatly minimize such things.

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? (NKJV) What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? (NASB)

James opens the section with a question. The Holy Spirit wants each Christian to give serious consideration and to ponder the reason that there are quarrels and conflicts in their lives. He wants us to think about the source of these conflicts. The term "where" is defined:

"pothen... whence... a. of place, from what place... b. of origin or source, i.q. from what author or giver... c. of cause, how is it that? how can it be that? ..." (Thayer, 524; 4159)

"pothen... interrog. Adv. whence? 1. of place, ... who and from what country art thou? ... 2. of origin; from what source does he boast that his race is? ... 3. in speaking, 4. alone, pothen of the cause, whence? Wherefore? ..." (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:4159)

This is a term used to describe where something came from. It can refer either to place, origin or cause depending on what is being discussed. Quarrels and conflicts come from somewhere. They have a source, an origin and a cause. What is it? Often in the midst of such a quarrel, the source and origin is discussed. We seek to place fault and blame. Often, we want to pin the source of our quarrels and conflicts on the person we are quarrelling and having conflicts with. But as an old English proverb puts it: "It takes two to quarrel." Or as the proverbs of God put it:

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. 21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. Pr 26:20-21

The source of any quarrel may be pinpointed to a certain word, or a certain act on one person's part, but it can only escalate into a quarrel if both parties allow it to do so. God is very clear on the part a Christian is to play in any quarrel or conflict:

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Rom 12:18

For the Christian, their side should always lead to a peaceful resolution to all conflicts. Hence the source of conflicts that have developed should be carefully considered. The term "quarrels" is defined:

"polemos... to turn, to range about, ... 1. prop. a. war ... b. a fight, a battle, ... 2. a dispute, strife, quarrel..." (Thayer, 528; 4170)

polemos and *mache* occur often together (Homer, Il. i. 177; v. 891; Plato, ...Job 38:23; James 4:1); and in like manner *polemein* and *machesthai*. There is the same difference between them as between our own 'war' and 'battle'; *o polemos peloponhsiakos*, the Peloponnesian War; hen *Marathoni mache*,

the battle of Marathon. Dealing with the words in this antithesis, namely that *polemos* embraces the whole course of hostilities, *mache* the actual shock in arms of hostile armies, (Trench's Synonyms of the NT 4171)

This term takes in conflicts of all extremes. It can range from a husband wife quarrel that is quickly resolved to the ravages of an all out war between nations. Where do the disputes, strifes, quarrels, battles, fights and wars that occur come from? As the Psalmist stated, it must never come from us.

My soul has dwelt too long With one who hates peace. 7 I am for peace; But when I speak, they are for war. Ps 120:6-7

Where do the bickering and quarreling that leads to the war of divorce come from? Where do the quarrels that split congregations and destroy friendships come from? Where do the quarrels that lead to world wars come from? Before he answers, he asks one other thing? Where do “conflicts” come from? This term is defined:

“*mache... fight, combat;... 1. of those in arms, a battle. 2. of persons at variance, disputants, etc., strife, contention; a quarrel...*” (Thayer, 394; 3163)

mache machomai ... battle, fight, combat, sea fights, ... to fight a battle, ... to engage battle with one, to win a battle, battle with an enemy, 2. in pl. quarrels, strifes, wranglings, 3. agon, a contest for a prize in the games, Pind.: generally a struggle, II. a mode of fighting, way of battle, III. a field of battle, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:3163)

This word too can encompass everything from the conflict of men in battle who are preparing to kill one another to the minor quarrels that are quickly resolved. What is the source of such strife and contention that leads to quarrels and fights? With all the positive commands and lessons on love, mercy, forbearance, mercy, peace, self-control and gentleness, along with all the negative commands against anger, strife, wrath, jealousy, and envy, how can the Lord’s church ever see such things occur among the members?

Do they not come from your desires for pleasure (NKJV) Is not the source your pleasures (NASB)

To stress the answer, James used two terms for source. Our English only translates one of them, but the literal terms would be: “*not hence*,” “*out of*” your lusts that war in your members?” “Hence” is defined:

“*enteuthen... adv. of place, from this place, hence,.... metaph. hence, i. e. from that cause or origin, from this source...*” (Thayer, 218; 1782)

“*enteuthen b: a reference to reason or source - 'from this.' 'is it not from this, namely, from your desires which are at war within you' (a reference to an occasion or set of circumstances regarded as present) James 4:1. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1782)*

As we look at the definition, it doesn’t differ a lot from the one above “*whence*” Except in this case, it is the answer to “*whence*.” It clearly focuses on the “*cause, origin, source, and reason*.” The cause, origin and source of quarrelling and fighting is then defined as “*out of...*”

“*ek... It denotes as well exit or emission out of, as separation from, something with which there has been close connection; opp. to the preposition EIS into and EN in: from out of, out from, forth from, from... I. of PLACE,... II of the ORIGIN, SOURCE, CAUSE... (Thayer, p. 189; 1537)*

Quarrels and fights comes “from out of,” “out from,” “forth from.” The term stresses origin, source and cause. It is almost identical to meaning to the first term. The first term is used only about 10 times in the NT while the second is used about 900 times. The first term is very specific a term of source while the second is a general term for it. Using them both together stresses this as the **SOURCE** and **ORIGIN** of all wars and fights. This is where they come from.

The place from which these things originate, their cause and source develops from within the heart of men. They come from the desires for pleasure which each individual member allows to take too much precedence in their lives. When desire for pleasure takes priority over peace with brethren then wars and fightings will come. The term “desire for pleasure” is defined:

“hedone... pleasure... by meton. desires for pleasure... “ (Thayer, p. 276; 2237)

“hedone.... pleasure, gratification; esp. sensual pleasure,... a passion,... Harper’s Analytical 185

“hedone.... In the NT hedone represents one of the many forces which belong to the world of unsanctified carnality, which strive against the work of God and His Spirit and which drag man back again into the kingdom of evil... derives from the same root as hedus, “sweet,” “pleasant,” “delightful” what is pleasant to the senses, namely, to the sense of taste... “feeling of pleasure” or “enjoyment”... hedone is one of the marks of a definite orientation of life opposed to the Christian. As such it has its place in the antithesis on which the world of NT thinking is based. (Kittel, Vol 2 p 909-926).

This term “desire for pleasure” is a term that was taken by the Holy Spirit to describe the very opposite of what Christian’s are supposed to be feeling. This is the “if it feels good do it” philosophy of our age. It denotes the craving for pleasure that sets God’s limitations aside and does as it pleases. Often the very fact that God condemns it makes it that much more sweeter to do it. Consider two Scriptures that use the term with the term underlined.

Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. Lk. 8:14

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Titus 3:3-4

Every quarrel and every conflict finds it’s source in the area of man’s character that sets aside God’s limitations to fulfill its own desires. It comes when we seek for the pleasure that selfishly sets aside the rights of others in order to make us feel good. When they respond with an objection the battle and war begins. All quarrels come from giving in to our own feelings that make us feel good rather than following the rule and order that God has instituted. Quarrels and conflicts are impossible to the Christian who has placed God’s limitations on every area of their life. They can only come when men give in to their sensual lusts.

Why is this so? How can the Spirit make a conclusion like that? Consider the very nature and essence of the gospel: God is a God of peace

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Heb. 13:20-21

Jesus was the Prince of Peace for exactly that reason and left this peace to His disciples, by following the same rule.

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Isa 9:6

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. John 14:27

We are commanded to be at peace and told it will be one of the fruits of the spirit.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Rom 12:18

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 ~~So~~ let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. Rom 14:17-19

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal 5:22-23

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Eph 4:1-3

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. Heb 12:14

With all this, where can quarrels and conflicts come from? We are supposed to get along and forbear and on our end learn to get along with every one. They have to come another source than the gospel and God so what is left. As the Spirit here reveals it is because we take some form of subtle pleasure in hurting others when we don't get our way. God commanded just the exact opposite. If we allow them to surface, then must be giving in to our own pleasures. If we were doing the will of the Lord, they would never happen.

that war in your members

The term "members" is a term used in the Scriptures (See ICor. 12:12-20) for both the individual members of the human body and the individual members of Christ's body, the church. It is defined:

"melos... a member, limb... prop. a member of the human body... " (Thayer, 397; 3196)

melos ... "a limb of the body," is used (a) literally, Matt 5:29-30; Rom 6:13 (twice), in Col 3:5, "mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth"; since our bodies and their "members" belong to the earth, and are the instruments of sin, they are referred to as such (cf. Matt 5:29-30; Rom 7:5,23, mentioned above); the putting to death is not physical, but ethical; as the physical "members" have distinct individualities, so those evils, of which the physical "members" are agents, are by analogy regarded as examples of the way in which the "members" work if not put to death..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:3196)

The idea that the pleasures of this world make war in our members against our spirit is clearly described in the books of Romans and Galatians:

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Rom. 7:20-23

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. Gal. 5:16-19

The members of our body cry out for gratification. Their desires for fulfillment sometimes take a higher priority in our mind than the desire to be right with God. When this occurs we sin. This is true of every lust and the deeds they prompt to. Adultery occurs when the lust for a woman wars in a man's members until he succumbs to it. Stealing occurs when greed and desire for money wars in a man's members until he succumbs to it. Quarrels and conflicts also occur as a result of these warring desires. Note the works of the flesh and deeds of the flesh that war in the members and create these conflicts:

For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another. Gal 5:14-15

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21

But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Col 3:8

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Eph 4:31-32

With these passages it is clear that there are many "pleasures" that war in our members that can lead toward quarrels and conflicts. "Enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, wrath, malice, slander, bitterness and clamor are all fully capable of beginning a quarrel or a conflict. We don't normally think of these as "pleasures," but when angry, giving in to that anger and allowing these other emotions full reign does bring a pleasure to enough of us that all the quarrels in the world are created. This takes us back on step from the tongue in chapter three. While the tongue is the fire, these emotions are the pleasures that create it and the

source that brings it out of the heart and into the world.

Many of the other lusts described in the Bible are also capable of beginning conflicts. The interesting point that we ought to ponder is “why are these things pleasures. Is enmity a pleasure? Are strife, jealousy, factions, wrath, slander and bitterness pleasures? The answer is yes and no. The emotions themselves are not pleasurable, but giving in to them often is. I may not seek for the emotion of anger, wrath, jealousy or vindictiveness. I may not enjoy the feelings when they come, but there is something very sweet to the human heart in giving in to them and either in word or deed paying them back. Vengeance is a very good feeling to many people.

Think of the pull these things have in our movies and entertainment. Movies that begin with injustice and terrible acts of violence against the innocent, then slowly build until the innocent victim is able to kill and destroy those who did those terrible things. There is a terrible pleasure when the wicked are destroyed.

There are no conflicts that do not trace back to the war that the lusts are waging in our members. The term “wage war” is defined:

“strateuomai... to make a military expedition, to lead soldiers to war or to battle, (spoken of a commander; to do military duty, be on active service, be a soldier; in the N. T. only in the mid. ... to fight... trop. of the conflicts of the apostolic office...” of passions that disquiet the soul...” (Thayer, p. 590; 4754)

“strateia... an expedition, campaign; military service, warfare:...” (Thayer, p. 590; 4752)

The lusts above and others like them make a military expedition in our members. It is a terrible war between the flesh and the spirit. The lusts and desires for pleasure war against the controlling elements in our spirit. When we lose these battles they often erupt in ways that others can see. These in turn often lead to the fightings within a congregation lead to splits and loss of souls. The fight should be within and never see the light of day:

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor 9:21-31).

This fight is to the death.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Gal. 2:19-22

2 You lust and do not have.

James continues his inspired explanation of where all fights and wars begin. Whether it be nations, churches or families, these wars, feuds, battles and skirmishes do not have any source in God or righteousness. Whenever we are in such a battle, we must realize that there can be no scriptural excuse for it. These things only exist in “*our desire for pleasure*” that exists in our members. If we have not yet found that desire, we need to keep digging for it, because it is there. Hiding in the midst of the lust of the flesh or eyes, or within the pride of life, it is not of the Father, but of the World. Jesus is the prince of peace and in much as lies within all of us we too must be for peace. There is some perverse pleasure or lust that is at the bottom of it and until it is addressed and removed, there will never be peace.

The term “*lust*” is a synonym and an extension for the “*desire of pleasure.*” They both describe the desires of the flesh and mind that war against the soul.

*11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly **lusts** which war against the soul, 1Pet. 2:11*

He is repeating the same term that was used in the first chapter.

*14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own **desires (lusts)** and enticed. 15 Then, when **desire (lust)** has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

These are the powerful emotions that lead us directly to sin. They are found in our members and exist to fulfill the lusts and cravings of the flesh.

“epithumeo... prop. to keep the thumos (passion and desire) turned upon a thing, hence [cf. our to set one’s heart upon] to have a desire for, long for; absol. to desire [A. V.] to lust after, covet, of those who seek things forbidden ...” (Thayer, pdd. 238; 1937)

epithumia ... to set one's heart upon a thing, lust after, long for, covet, desire, ... to desire to do, ... eagerness for it, ...” (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1937)

The context makes clear that these are unlawful and sinful fleshly desires. When God’s people keep their powerful desires and cravings turned upon things that are unlawful, terrible consequences like this are always going to follow. If we compare the manifest works of the flesh we see the lusts that lead to wars and fights.

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, **hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like**; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

On the other side are the spiritual fruits that always lead away from such sinful things.

*But the fruit of the Spirit **is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control**. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal 5:19-25*

Sadly, these lusts never lead to possession. Once one lust has dissipated into fulfillment, a new one arises that is stronger yet. So that that can never “have” what the seek.

“echo... I. Transitively. 1. to have i. q. to hold; a. to have (hold) in the hand: ... d. to hold fast, keep... e. to have (in itself or as a consequence), 2. to have i. q. to own, possess;...” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon 2192)

It is evident from this expression that this is a special class of those in the church. Not everyone has such lusts leading to such desires and to ever greater battles for dominion and power. Such people never find what they seek because it is an insatiable desire that can never be fulfilled and possessed. Those who are responsible for splitting churches are those who are factious, putting their own personal desires above the needs of the Jesus and His church.

You murder (NKJV)... so you commit murder. (NASB)

The term “murder” is repeated from the second chapter when James quoted one of the ten commandments of the Old law: “*you shall not kill.*”

“phoneuo...to kill, slay, murder; absol. to commit murder...” (Thayer, 657;5407)

phoneuo ... to deprive a person of life by illegal, intentional killing - 'to murder, to commit murder.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:5407).

Although the definition is clear that this is the actual act of murder, it seldom reaches that level, since the person who did that would then be arrested, imprisoned and probably executed. This is the murder Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder,” and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. 22 “But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, “You fool!” shall be in danger of hell fire. (Mt 5:21-22).

Anger is but one of many lusts that lead to murder, yet Jesus revealed that the guilt of murder is accrued at the moment of anger. We can be angered over the sin and the evil consequences that may have occurred, but the moment our anger focuses on the brother and not the sin, we have crossed the line and committed murder. When we compound that by our use of derisive terms of disgust and bitterness, the guilt becomes more severe. James spoke of the anger that blazed up and ruins the relationships of a lifetime. It comes because of strong lusts for something, but do not

and never can have it. This causes the loss of souls, and the loss of the harmony and peace in a congregation.

and covet and cannot obtain. And you are envious and cannot obtain; (NASB)

Since the term “covet” has a completely different Greek term than “envious,” it is better translated as the NASB chose.

“zeloo... to burn with zeal;... 1. absol. to be heated or to boil [A. V. to be moved] with envy, hatred, anger... in a good sense, to be zealous in the pursuit of good... 2. trans... to desire earnestly, pursue...” (Thayer, 271; 2206)

This is the verb form of the noun used back in chapter 3:14 that was translated “bitter jealousy.” It is used elsewhere in the NT, and although it is sometimes used in a good sense, here it is clearly an evil emotion that fits in well with a few other uses in the NT. This was the emotion that led the brothers of Joseph to sell him to Egypt and the same emotion that led the Jews to find some evil men and through slander and lies set the entire city into an uproar. Yet *agape* - love will not allow this emotion any foothold in the heart.

“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him Acts 7:9

But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. Acts 17:5

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; 1 Cor 13:4

This is a terrible emotion that we should never allow to enter the heart for it can lead to terrible things. Thus heated and boiling up of anger along with the terrible raging of envy wages war in our members. The only release of such emotions requires the destruction of others. It is a powerful pleasure for those who are filled with it. Truly it is an emotion of great horror and damage and its proximity here to murder describes how awful an emotion it can be. Just the descriptions ought to cause God’s people to run from them.

But this emotion does not find the type of release they are seeking. They cannot get what the envy is leading them to desire.

“dunamai... to be able, have power, whether by virtue of one’s own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom... to be able to do something... to be able, capable, strong, powerful...” (Thayer, p. 158-159; 1410)

The power to master the above is not within the human realm. Such emotions cannot be fulfilled. They grow, they eat like gangrene, they die, but they are never fulfilled in a way that anyone could say they really attained or gained something:

“epitugchano... 1. to light or hit upon any person or thing... 2. to attain to, to obtain...” (Thayer, p. 245; 2013)

You fight and war. So you fight and quarrel. (NASB)

So now we have come full circle. While in the first verse he asked each of us to consider their source. Where did these things come from? Though he now substitutes verbs for nouns. These two terms are exactly the same words as those found in verse one. That question has now been answered. They come because of the sinful lusts and pleasures of sin that are waging a war in the members of our fleshly body. They have no good source and any time they appear, it is because of the lusts that lead to sin. Their very existence is proof of sin. They stem from the anger and derision that bring murder and the envy that leads people to act in destructive ways.

Having said all the above, it is obvious that when we “fight” and “war,” we are sinning.

“polemeo... to war, carry one war; to fight... to wrangle, quarrel...” (Thayer, 528; 4170)

“machomai... to fight prop. of armed combatants, or those who engage in a hand-to-hand struggle,... trop of those who engage in a war of words, to quarrel, wrangle, dispute... of those who contend at law

for property and privileges... “ (Thayer, 394; 3163)

If we would all carefully look back at our last quarrel, fight or conflict, or carefully consider the source of the next one, it will always be the same. We wanted something we could not or did not get. Either because it was not possible to gain it or because it was sinful to have it. So we became angry or jealous of another. This led to the fight. Watch and see if they don't all do this. Next time stop it in its infancy.

Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

James repeats “echo” from above. They do not have, they cannot take possession of or own it “because” they do not ask for it. The term “because” is “*dia*.. the means or instrument by which anything is effected.” They did not have because they did not use the means or instrument to get it. While this asking could be what we ask of another, the next verse makes clear that this is prayer. The only real way to get something we want is to ask God for it. The things they really needed to have they were not getting because they were not asking for them. They were not making requests and had overlooked the great value of asking, seeking or knocking.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Mt 7:7-11).

God has made some precious and exceeding great promises through prayer. God could help us grow out of all the terrible thing James described in 4:1-2, but these people had never asked God to help them with their envy, anger and desires for pleasure in their members. It never occurred to them to seek help from God to help them with these things.

3 You ask and do not receive, 3 You ask and do not receive,

Some were asking. Some were praying, but from the next phrase, we see that they were not praying for the right things, or were not praying with the right motives. As a result of this their prayers were not being answered and they were not “receiving:”

“lambano,... to take, i.e. 1. To take with the hand, lay hold of... any pers. or thing in order to use it: absol., 3. to take what is one's own, to take to one's self, to make one's own... II to receive (what is given) to gain, get, obtain...” (Thayer, p. 370-371; 2983).

God was not answering their prayers. They were not gaining any benefits from the prayers. This is always a clear sign to any Christian that something is wrong. When we ask for the things God has asked us for, God is very pleased to answer and give the things that we need:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. 1Jn. 5:14-15

The key to receiving what we ask for is learning His will and asking according to His will. Those who fight and war have a long way to travel to be right with Him and they must be asking for those things that would lead them back to the way of peace.

not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 1 Peter 3:9-12

because you ask amiss, because you ask with wrong motives,

This term “because” is defined:

*“dioti, conjunction, equiv to *dia touto, hoti*; 1. on this account that, because...” (Thayer, p. 162; 1360)*

It was “*on this account*” that they were not receiving. This is the exact reason why God could not and would not answer their prayers. They were asking with the wrong motives. Their prayers were

“tainted:”

“*kakos... badly, ill, i.e. a. [in a physical sense] miserably ... to be ill, sick... b. [morally] improperly, wrongly... with bad intent...*” (Thayer, 321; 2560)

The requests that made up their prayers were miserable, improper and wrong. They were spiritually ill and diseased requests. Their motives were tainted and their view of things wrong. Their prayers (probably indirectly) were leading to the fulfillment of their evil desires. Their prayers were directed in such a way that God could see they were evil. It was leading entirely in the wrong direction.

Even praying for wisdom, praying for strength, praying for character and ability can be tainted if the reason someone wants it is to show up another or in some way use it evilly.

that you may spend it on your pleasures. so that you may spend {it} on your pleasures.

This is a key ingredient of all improperly motivated and sickly prayers. We need to carefully consider this motive and banish it if it is even possible in any of our prayers.

“*hina... If a final conjunction (for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention) denoting purpose and end: to the intent that; to the end that, in order that;... it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;...*” (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)

If the intent, direction and end of the prayer is to spend it on pleasure, even if it be ever so slightly tinted that way it is forbidden. We need to look carefully at the intent of every prayer. If it even might be used to “*spend*” on pleasure it should not be asked. The term “*spend*” is defined:

“*dapano... to incur expense, expend, spend... in a bad sense, to waste, squander, consume...*” (Thayer, p. 125; 1159)

Note that in a bad sense this is a wasted and squandered thing. To even ask for it is a fault. The term “*pleasure*” is the same terrible word defined and described back in the first verse of this chapter. It is a negative term and one that God will not even give an answer to. If the only motive behind our prayers is the means to fulfill the things of this life, then we have missed the entire point not only of prayer, but of the death of Christ and the kingdom of God. Jesus warned very strongly in the sermon on the mount that no one could properly serve God if they were too concerned with the affairs of this life.

4 You adulteresses,

James now calls such exactly what they are. Their marriage to Christ has been tainted with a compromise with the world that can bring no other condemnation than this. Those who hold to the attitudes above deserve the spiritual designation James gives to them. They are not faithful in their service or relations with Christ. He died to purchase so that we would not spend the rest of our time in such pursuits.

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — 1Pet. 4:1-3

do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?

The term “*know*” is defined:

“*oida,... 1. like the Lat. NOVI it has the signification of a present to know, understand; and in the plpf. the signif. of an impf. 1. to know,... 2. to know i. e. get knowledge of, understand, perceive; a. any fact... b. the force and meaning of something that has definite meaning;... c. as in class. Grk., foll. by an inf. in the sense of to know how (Lat. calleo, to be skilled in ...Phil 4:12)...*” (Thayer, p. 174).

This is the knowledge of experience. The knowledge of doing and of the understanding gained by doing. Every Christian ought to know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God by personal experience. They have already lived through it once. They know that these things bring them right back to what they were before they came to the Lord. They know they are giving in to their weaknesses and not serving the Lord, or at least they should. This is something all Christians

need to know clearly and to avoid it at all costs.

No Christian can have “friendship” with the world.

“*philia... friendship...*” (Thayer, 654; 5373)

It is “enmity” with God.

“*echthra...* (fr. the adj. *echthros*), *enmity...*” (Thayer, p. 265; 2189)

“*echthra ... a state of enmity with someone - 'enmity, being an enemy of.'* (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:2189)

One either hates the world and is loved by God, or makes himself a friend of the world and detestable to God. Consider the figure. What husband or wife would compliment or feel close to their mate after adultery? What husband or wife finds this a loveable characteristic of their mate? How can we expect God to view us with love and favor after we commit such an act? Make no mistake here, every such act is an act of adultery in the sight of God!

Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

This conclusion cannot be denied. It will always be true just as it is in the marriage realm. Any husband or wife who makes him/herself friendly to another in a romantic way makes themselves an enemy in that act to the one they love. So it is with God. We can seek to deny this conclusion, but God will hold us to it. If we are “friendly.”

“*philos... friendly ... 1. ... a friend... he who associates familiarly with one, a companion ... one who finds his pleasure in a thing...*” (Thayer, 654-655; 5384)

With the world,

“*kosmos... 5. the inhabitants of the world... particularly the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human race... 6. the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ... 7. worldly affairs; the aggregate of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which, although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ...*” (Thayer p 356-357; 2889)

In the context of sin and evil, the world refers to those who are alienated from God and stir desire and seduce from God. If we go after the world, then we “make” ourselves God’s enemies. “Make” is defined:

“*kathistemi...* (prop. *to set down, put down*), *to set, place, put*: a. ... *to set one over a thing (in charge of it)...* b. *to appoint one to administer an office...* c. *to set down as, constitute...* i. q. *to declare, show to be...* d. *to constitute...* i. q. *to render, make, cause to be...* e. *to conduct or bring to a certain place...* f. Mid. *to show or exhibit one’s self; come forward as:...*” (Thayer, p. 314)

This is a term of setting, placing or appointing. If we do any of these things, we make ourselves God’s enemies. If you want to appoint yourself to be an enemy of God, then all you have to do is compromise with and become friendly with the world. If all the condemnation in the Scriptures about not practicing these vile things will not keep us away from them, then perhaps this stern rebuke will. We are appointing ourselves God’s enemies. The term “enemy” is a different form of the term used earlier and translated *enmity*.

“*echthros... 1. passively, hated, odious, hateful,... 2. actively, hostile, hating and opposing another... , used of men at enmity with God by their sin...*” (Thayer, p. 265; 2190)

echthros an adjective signifying “hated, hateful, or hostile,” is used also as a noun denoting “an enemy,” translated “foes” in Matt 10:36 (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:2190)

echthros ... : pertaining to being at enmity with someone - 'being an enemy, in opposition to.' ‘being enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son’ Rom 5:10; (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:2190)

Before we became a Christian, we were the enemies of God. If we restore our friendship with the world, we return to that state.

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 'I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.' 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, speaks to no purpose: (NASB)

Having now completed the first section, James offers the only possible alternative to the above conclusions. Either they must now acknowledge the truth that the true source of wars, battles, and conflicts are coming from exactly where he has revealed them to be: "**Or**" which is a disjunctive conjunction giving two things that "*mutually exclude each other*" or revealing that one of these "*one of which can take the place of the other.*"

"ñ - e, a disjunctive conjunction... Used 1. to distinguish things or thoughts which either mutually exclude each other, or one of which can take the place of the other..." (Thayer, p. 275; 2228)

Thus all conflicts arise from one of two causes. Either, first, because of "*your desires for pleasure that war in your members,*" and more specifically because, "*you lust and do not have,*" "*you murder and covet and cannot obtain,*" "*you do not have because you do not ask,*" and "*you ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*" If they will carefully look into their heart and soul they will find that this is exactly what their problem is.

They will then be forced to conclude that if it is because of them that these problems have occurred then they truly are "*adulterers and adulteresses,*" in the sight of God. Everyone who acts in this way must understand that "*friendship with the world is enmity with God*" and "*whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*"

The only other possibility is that you believe the the Scriptures speak in vain. These are the only two possibilities. When these problems are occurring in a congregation or a home either one is a friend of the world, an enemy of God, an adulterer / adulteress, or they don't really believe the Scriptures and don't trust them.

We remember one who must have thought the Scriptures spoke in vain. It was Solomon. He set aside the commands God had given to the king, and in spite of all his wisdom, inspiration and all that he had seen, the very issue that God had warned against came upon him.

*"When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But **he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'** 17 **Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.** 18 "Also it shall be, **when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.** 19 And it shall be with him, and **he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,** 20 **that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.** Deut 17:14-20*

These are the only commands God gave to the king, and it is very unlikely he did not know them. It is specifically stated that it was because he multiplied wives to himself in spite of what the Scriptures had said (thought they spoke in vain), that this came upon him. Yet it was not only because of these two commands, but all the other commands in the Scriptures regarding the marriage of foreign women that led to this:

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites — 2 from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. 9 So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. 1Kings 11:1-11

It is the height of folly to think the Scriptures speak in vain. Many have said in their hearts, this has happened to others, but it will not happen to me. They set aside or set at nought the Scriptures! All who have done this have paid the price.

What happened to Solomon will surely happen to all who create and cause strife in the manner described above. So each of us are not brought face to face with the question:

Do you think the Scriptures speak in vain?

These are not good choices, either you have made yourself God’s enemy or you think the Scriptures speak in vain and do not mean what they say. Yet Jesus said the Scripture can’t be broken. Would you like to affirm that this is what you “*think*.”

“dokeo... 1. to be of opinion, think, suppose... 2. intrans. to seem, be accounted, reputed... 3. inpers. ... it seems to me; i.e. a. I think judge...” (Thayer, p. 154; 1380).

Maybe you have judged and are of the opinion that you don’t have to worry about what the Scriptures say about things. Maybe you can do what Solomon could not do? You can set aside Scripture as you like because they are actually void of power and speak with no real meaning (*vain*). James has already used this term to describe the “vain man” who thinks that faith without works will save him. Now he repeats the same emptiness and applies it to Scripture.

“kenos,... empty; 1. prop. of places, vessels, etc., which contain nothing... metaph. empty, vain; devoid of truth... 2. of men, empty-handed, without a gift:... metaph. destitute of spiritual wealth, ... 3. metaph. of endeavors, labors, acts, which result in nothing, vain, fruitless, without effect... in vain to no purpose...” (Thayer, p. 343; 2756)

kenos outside the NT. ... 1. Lit. “empty,” “without content,” ... 2. Fig. a. of persons, “hollow,” “vain,” ... In biblical Gk. the moral element becomes stronger. ... not just foolish and vain but useless and careless persons ... “frothy,” “frivolous,” ...” (Kittel, TDWNT NT:2756)

kenos ... 1. of things, empty, opp. to full ... 2. metaph. empty, vain, ... to no purpose, in vain, ... II. of persons, 1. c. gen. void, destitute, bereft, ... Soph.: -empty of wit, empty-headed, (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 2756)

Who would dare to even speak such blasphemy? Anyone with any faith at all knows all Scripture is given by inspiration and nothing is vain. Yet that is the only real alternative if we don’t repent and change our thinking. God not only has the wisdom to see that everything He speaks is true. He also has the power to make it true.

Many Christians have sought and searched for a specific Scripture that teaches this truth. But there is no single verse in the Old or New Testament that makes this exact statement. But though there is no single Scripture, the entire OT breathes it in example after example. It appears Eve was moved by it when she hoped to be like God, God warned Cain of exactly the same thing James speaks of here.

but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." Gen. 4:5-7

It is a recurrent theme throughout the Scriptures. "Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die!'" (Gen. 30:1). Joseph's brothers envied him when he spoke of his dreams (Gen. 37:11; Acts 7:9). We see it with Moses and Korah. When God saw it in Aaron and Miriam in their feelings toward Moses, He dealt with it swiftly and clearly. When it reared up again in King Saul, as he sought to kill David, but only ended up dead. Over and over again the scriptures we see this. There is no denying that this is the truth. It worked in their members. It will work the same in ours!

It is spoken of in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones. Pr. 14:30

Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. Ecc. 4:4

One of the most enlightening is seen in what Pilate saw in the Jewish leaders and later in others of Israel.

Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them. 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. Mark 15:8-10

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Acts 13:45-46

But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. Acts 17:5

The one passage that sets this forth as clearly as anywhere in the New Testament Scriptures is the one where Paul condemned those in Corinth for exactly the same thing and later told them that agape - love would remove it.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? 1Cor. 3:1-4

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1Cor. 13:4-7

There are many passages that express exactly what James does here.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Gal 5:25-26

Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: 16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. Phil 1:15-18

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. 1 Tim 6:3-5

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Titus 3:3-4

With all these passages do we think the Scriptures speak in vain? Do we honestly believe we can set all this aside and it won't be a problem to us? What Solomon could not do, no one else can do. No Scripture speaks in vain and if we don't listen, someday, we too will be caught.

“The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?”

Although there are two distinct and differing possible translations of this phrase, only one really fits the context of all that was just said. This is not a compliment since God needs to give more grace as a result. All the translations except the NASB and NKJV take the same view. While these later translations are a fair way to translate the words, it doesn't fit the context or agree with the other translations.

*scripture saith in vain, **The spirit** that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? (KJV)*
*speakech in vain? Doth **the spirit** which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? (ASV)*
*says without reason that **the spirit** he caused to live in us envies intensely? (NIV)*

*the Scripture says in vain, “**The Spirit** who dwells in us yearns jealously”? (NKJ)*
*speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires **the Spirit** which He has made to dwell in us”? (NAS)*

As note above, Eve clearly yearned enviously for God's knowledge as the pride of life took control. Cain's clearly yearned enviously for his brothers praise and Joseph's brothers yearned jealously for his dreams. It just goes on and on and on. This is a major problem of the human race and one we must seriously consider.

Whenever the Greek term “*pneuma*” is used, we are forced to wrestle with the same questions. Should this be capitalized as the Holy Spirit or lower case for my spirit? The translators only have the context to decide. There is nothing in the word itself.

“pneuma... 1. a movement of air, (gentle) blast; a. of the wind..., hence the wind itself... b. breath of the nostrils or mouth often in Greek writings... the breath of life... 2. the spirit, i.e. the vital principle by which the body is animated... the rational spirit, the power by which a human being feels, thinks, wills, decides; the soul... to pneuma is the rational part of man, the power of perceiving and grasping divine and eternal things, and upon which the Spirit of God exerts its influence;... 3. a spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting;... b. a human soul that has left the body... c. a spirit higher than man but lower than God, i.e. an angel... 4. The Scriptures also ascribe a pneuma to GOD, i.e. God's power and agency-- distinguishable in thought... from God's essence in itself considered... The Holy Spirit... 5. univ. the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one; the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire, etc...” (Thayer, p. 520-523; 4151)

The vocabulary and word order of the verse are:

πρὸς φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ κατῴκισεν ἐν ἡμῖν,
to envy is lusting the spirit that is dwelling in us

This is all the translators have to work with and some of these terms are ambiguous because they can be translated in more than one way. But I believe after careful study we will be led to the conclusion that the translations that have our spirit are the correct rendering.

The preposition translated “to” is used with the accusative to denote a direction, position or state. Hence the spirit is set in the direction, position and state of lusting toward envy.

“pros. a preposition, ... I. with the ACCUSATIVE ... to, towards, ... denoting direction towards a thing, or position and state looking towards a thing... 1. of the goal or limit towards which a movement is directed... e. of an intended end or purpose... Eph 4:12...” (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit., p 541-543)

The intended direction of the spirit was to dwell within us. But in dwelling within us it longs to “envy.” This term is defined:

*“phthonos... envy, is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing the advantage or prosperity of others; this evil sense always attaches to this word...” (*Vine vol 2 p 37; 5355)*

“phthonos... a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage

experienced by such a person - 'envy, jealousy.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:5355)

This term is only used in an evil way in the NT, which is one of the stronger arguments that it is out of place to translate this with the Holy Spirit since it is never used anywhere else in Scripture in a good way. It is not like zealous that has both a good and bad side.

“phthonos... , masc. noun. Envy, jealousy, pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness (Matt 27:18; Mark 15:10; Rom 1:29; Phil 1:15; 1 Tim 6:4; Titus 3:3; James 4:5). phthónoi, envyings, bursts of envy (Gal 5:21; 1 Peter 2:1). Phthónos, unlike zelos (2205), zeal, is incapable of good and always is used with an evil meaning. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT: 5355)

When our spirit is “lusting” toward this evil “envy, jealousy, and the pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence of happiness,” it is never a good thing and no good thing comes from it.

“epipotheo... to long for, desire... to be possessed with a desire for, long for,... to pursue with love, to long after... absol. to lust [i.e. harbor forbidden desire]... (Thayer, p. 241 NT:1971).

epipotheo.... : to long for something, with the implication of recognizing a lack - 'to long for, to deeply desire, deep desire.' 'the spirit which he has placed in us longs jealously' or 'the spirit that he placed in us is filled with jealous desire' James 4:5. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT 1971)

epipotheo.... "to long for greatly" (a strengthened form of potheo, "to long for," not found in the NT), is translated "I long," in Rom 1:11; in 2 Cor 5:2, RV, "longing" (KJV, "earnestly desiring"); in 1 Thess 3:6 and 2 Tim 1:4, RV, "longing" (KJV, "desiring greatly"); (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1971)

Man's spirit longs toward envy, jealousy and selfishness. Though God made man upright, since the fall, man has tended toward these terrible emotions. The marvel of it all is that God didn't just give up in disgust. But instead, God gave greater “grace.” He actually became more merciful and compassionate as man degraded to a lower and lower levels. This is the wonder and amazing love and mercy of our God. As man went lower and lower, God continued to lower the standards so he could meet them. This came a great cost to Himself. He had to offer His Son as the sacrifice to make this possible.

6 But He gives more grace. 6 But He gives a greater grace.

Whether we are fully aware of the above in our heart of hearts is doubtful. We simply can't see how far into envy and jealousy we are influenced. But it is a universal problem that we must all become aware of. We have been promised however that even though God can see it clearly within us, He still gives us greater grace as we catch up.

This is a gift God offers to all Christians as they grow from ignorance into knowledge and weakness into strength. It is truly our only hope for salvation, because no matter how long we are allowed to live we will never reach perfection and worthiness. We are to repent of all we know about and all we are aware of and we change our convictions as quickly as we learn that we are wrong, but the sad truth is that without this wonderful promise we could have not hope. God gives us us greater grace when we are striving as hard as we can to must the strength and effort to grow.

Since this is something God “gives,” it is something we can ask for.

“didomi... to give... A. absolutely and generally... B. In construction... I to give something to some one, - in various senses; 1. of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow; give as a gift... 2. to grant, give to one asking, let have... 3. to supply, furnish, necessary things... 4. to give over, deliver, ... 5. to give what is due or obligatory, to pay: wages or reward... 6. didomi is joined with nouns denoting an act or an effect... “ (Thayer, p. 145-147; 1325)

God, of His own accord, bestows, gives as a gift, supplies, furnishes and delivers greater grace to us. He saw the need that we had and He met it for us. The term “greater” was a superlative term for Greek speaking people. It is defined:

“megas... great; 1. predicated a. of external form or sensible appearance of things (or persons); in particular, of space and its dimensions-- as respects... bb compass and extent; large, spacious... gg. measure and height... long... b. of number and quantity, numerous, large... used of intensity and degree... of natural events powerfully affecting the senses, i.q. violent, mighty, strong... 2 predicated of rank, as

belonging to a. persons, eminent for ability, virtue, authority, power; ... univ. *eminent, distinguished... something higher, more exalted, more majestic...* b. things to be esteemed highly for their importance, ... 3. *splendid, prepared on a grand scale...*" (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit., p. 394-395; 3173).

What God gave to those men and women of faith was grace prepared on a grand scale. It was more exalted, more majestic, distinguished and eminent grace. He gave grace that was large in extent, long in measure, numerous in quantity, mighty in intensity and eminent in rank. By using such a superlative, the Spirit gives us the comfort and hope that God's character and mercy ought to bestow and instill in our hearts.

Again, God's grace always exceeds the flaws in our heart. The gospel was designed and planned to far exceed any character flaw and depths of degradation that man could possibly descend into. There is no person who has ever lived who has sunk so low or become so degraded, or allowed his character so much latitude to grow that it has exceeded God's grace. Even in these worst areas of human conduct coupled with the vile things such character weaknesses bring about God's grace is greater.

The term "grace" is defined:

charis ... connected with *charin* is first of all that property in a thing which causes it to give joy to the hearers or beholders of it,... and then, seeing that to a Greek there was nothing so joy-inspiring as grace or beauty, it implied the presence of this, ... *charis* after a while came to signify not necessarily the grace or beauty of a thing, as a quality appertaining to it; but the gracious or beautiful thing, act, thought, speech, or person it might be, itself—the grace embodying and uttering itself, where there was room or call for this, in gracious outcomings toward such as might be its objects; not any longer 'favour' in the sense of beauty, but 'the favour'; (Trench's Synonyms of the NT:5485)

"*charis... grace*; Latin *gratia*: I. *outward grace or favour (as we say well or ill favoured), grace, loveliness, Hom., etc.*; II. *grace or favour felt, whether on the part of the Doer or the Receiver*: 1. on the part of the Doer, *grace, graciousness, kindness, goodwill, ... for or towards one, ...* 2. on the part of the Receiver, *the sense of favour received, thankfulness, thanks, gratitude, ... for a thing, ... to acknowledge a sense of favour, feel grateful, ... to feel gratitude to one for a thing, ...* (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT: 5485)

"*charis... grace*; i. e. 1. prop. that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, *sweetness, charm, loveliness*: grace of speech... 2. *good will, lovingkindness, favor*: in a broad sense... (*favor* (i.e. act of favoring...)) ... used of the kindness of a master towards his inferiors or servants, and so esp. of God towards men... ...the word *charis* contains the idea of *kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved...* pre-eminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offenses, and bids them accept eternal salvation through Christ... 4. *thanks* (for benefits, services, favors). to be thankful to one..." (Thayer, p. p 665-666; 5485)

Of all the terms that can be used to describe the character of one who is in the position to give things to another, this term is one of the sweetest. It begins with the character of the person giving. It refers to a sweetness that leads to good will, lovingkindness and favor. This is the heart of grace. Grace is an emotion that leads to action. It is kindness and feelings of favor.

God holds humanity as something very special to Him. He has feelings of kindness, mercy and love toward them. This prompts Him to give us things that we do not deserve or merit.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. Eph 2:4-10

Therefore He says: God resists the proud, Therefore {it} says, God is opposed to the proud,

Since this is a conclusion, it is important to tie the two together.

dio relatively emphatic markers of result, usually denoting the fact that the inference is self-evident - 'therefore, for this reason, for this very reason, so then.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1352)

There is a “*inference that is self evident*” here and before we move further we must find and understand it. Since our spirit longs for and strongly desires the fruits of envy and malice when confronted with someone who is better than we are, God found the need to give greater grace to those who truly wanted to serve Him. It is for this reason that is self-evident, that God will resist the proud and give grace to the humble.

What is James’ point? That since we are now aware of the tendency to feel envy whenever someone gets something better than we thought they should under the circumstances to become humble and recognize that our feelings are out of bounds and have no place. Pride exacerbates the problem of envy. The more pride we have the problems we are going to have. In our own best interests God is going to have to resist and help us overcome it.

“*huperephanos*... the proper seat of the *huperphania* ... is within. **He that is sick of this sin compares himself, it may be secretly or openly, with others, and lifts himself above others, in honor preferring himself**; The bearing of the *uperphanos* toward others is not of the essence, is only the consequence, of his sin. His ‘arrogance,’ as we say, his claiming to himself of honour and observance

“*huperephanos*... **is the one who with pride, arrogance and foolish presumption brags of his position, power and wealth and despises others.** (Kittel, TWDNT NT 5244)

“*huperephanos*... “**showing oneself above others**” (*huper*, “over,” *phainomai*, “to appear”), is always used in the NT in the evil sense of “**arrogant, disdainful, haughty**”; it is rendered “haughty” in Rom 1:30 and 2 Tim 3:2, Jas. 4:6, and 1Pet. 5:5; I (Vine’s Expository Dictionary, NT:5244),

“*huperephanos*... 1. *showing oneself above others, overtopping, conspicuous above others, pre-eminent*,... 2. especially in a bad sense, **with an overweening estimate of one’s means or merits, despising others or even treating them with contempt, haughty**...” (Thayer, 641; 5244)

This is a difficult term to nail down because it has a large variety of meanings. It focuses on an attitude of self-importance that stems from the selfishness we never quite grew out of in our youth. Because we are SO important others have not importance and no value in the eyes of some afflicted with this sin. They don’t care, can’t empathize or sympathize with others. They despise others and see them as a hindrance and a problem when they keep us from getting what we believe we should be receiving. The Old Testament term that was used in the quotation takes it from a little different perspective:

“*luwts* (loots); a primitive root; properly, to make mouths at, i.e. to scoff; (Strong’s, Concordance OT:3887)

“*luwts* (loots); ... A verb meaning to boast, to scorn, to mock, to deride, or to imitate. This Hebrew verb is frequently found in the book of Proverbs (Prov 9:7,8; 13:1; 20:1), and means to deride or to boast so as to express utter contempt. The activity of the scornful is condemned as an abomination to people (Prov 24:9) and contrary to the Law of the Lord (Ps 1:1). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:3887)

Pride is a terrible emotion and state of mind that some in the human race have fallen into. It is a fatal flaw in our character and one that God’s grace cannot help. It must be destroyed. There is no excuse for it because there is no reason for it. Everything that man possesses is a gift. His soul, body, mind, emotions, looks, possessions, health, and every other thing. Nothing we possess can lead us to pride. It should lead to humility.

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 1Cor. 4:7

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. Rom. 12:3-4

The only thing God can do with the proud is seek to undermine and remove it. He will therefore resist and overthrow them.

antitasso anti, against, *tasso*, to arrange, originally a military term, to range in battle against, and frequently so found... to set oneself against, resist...” (Vine Vol 3 p 286; NT:498).

antitasso... to post in adverse array, as an army; mid. to set one's self in opposition, resist... to be averse..." Harpers Analytical Concordance p. 33; NT:498)

antitássœ; from *antí* (473), against, and *tássœ* (5021), to arrange. To set an army in array against, to arrange in battle order. In the NT, *antitássomai* is used metaphorically to set oneself in opposition to or in array against, to resist (Acts 18:6; Rom 13:2; James 4:6; 5:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Sept.: Prov 3:34). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:498)

This was originally a military term of setting up both sides in an arrangement in which they will oppose each other in battle. God sets himself in opposition toward and resists those who are proud. The proud need to realize that pride is an emotion that leads to God's going to battle against them. God sets himself in opposition against the proud. In order to help any human being reach his potential, pride must be broken, and God will do all He can to break it. The proud can count on God's opposition to this attitude. There is only one thing one can do with pride, kill it. God will never bless one of His servants who possesses it. He will have to knock it out of us.

but gives grace to the humble."

The characteristic that God most desires to see in humanity is "*humility*."

"tapeinos... low ... a. prop. not rising far from the ground... b. metaph a. as to condition, lowly, of low degree... i. q. brought low with grief, depressed, B. lowly in spirit, humble... (Thayer, 614; 5011)

"tapeinos... low in situation; of condition, humble, poor, mean, depressed, ... met. of the mind, humble, lowly, modest..." (Harper's Analytical Concordance p 397).

"tapeinos... to live in low regions, Pind.; of stature or size, low, ... 2. of the condition of persons, brought down, humbled, submissive, ... of low rank, lowly, mean, ... small, poor, weak, ... to be poorly off, ..." (from Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:5011)

What is the essence of the definition above? Is it not the recognition of the created being and creature that he owes it all to his Creator? The human being who understands the nature of the creation and of redemption will be humble, lowly and modest. There is nothing to be proud of! Everything was a gift from our loving and gracious God.

Humility is only by product of the faith that comes to God.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. Heb. 11:1-3

Once we have the recognition and admit that we are created and that everything that is made is out of things that don't appear, we are prepared to be humble.

Those who understand this are humble and meet for their Master's use and God can offer them the greatest amount of grace that He can bestow. Hence by being humble we are positioning ourselves for the richest and most wonderful blessings the Lord can give in this life. This is a wonderful and powerful promise. God offers His grace, kindness and love to those who are destroying their pride and seeking to gain this humility.

Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 1 Pet 5:5-7

Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD. Jer. 9:23-24

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. Pr. 8:13

When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom. Pr. 11:2

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Pr. 16:18

For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isaiah 57:15

7 Therefore submit to God. Submit therefore to God. NASB

James now makes another conclusion "*oun... a conjunction indicating that something follows from another necessarily*" By using this conjunction the Holy Spirit ties together the promise of the previous verse with the obvious conclusion of this one. It necessarily follows that since God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble that we ought to submit to God and thus show ourselves to be humble so we can enjoy the fullest benefits of His grace. The term "submit" is defined:

"hupotasso... to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection... mid. to subject one's self, to obey; to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice... to obey [R.V. subject one's self...] ... obey, be subject ..." (Thayer, p. 645; 5293)

hupotasso ... primarily a military term, "to rank under" (hupo, "under," tasso, "to arrange"), denotes (a) "to put in subjection, to subject," (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:5293).

God's greatest hope for all men is that they will willingly arrange themselves under His will. They will subordinate and subject themselves to His Word and obey it. All who listen to His wise and good counsel and submit to it are going to be blessed and will successfully fulfill all that must be done. Paul explained the difference between being the slaves of the terrible and selfish taskmaster of sin or being the slaves of the meek and gentle Savior in Romans 6-8. Jesus also summed it up:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Mt. 11:28-30

We must never forget the wages of serving sin is eternal death, while the free gift of those who submit to God is eternal life. So this will be the greatest and most crucial decision that any of us will ever make. The further we take this the greater the blessings and the more wonderful the grace. We need to learn to give up more and more every day. To quit walking in our own understanding and trust in the Lord with all our heart. More and more of our time, mind, money, and life are given to Him. This is the true nature of submission to God. We give Him more and more of everything we have, and as we give up more and more to Him He can give more and more to us.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body, and refreshment to your bones. Pr. 3:5-8

This is what Jesus did the entire time He dwelt among us on this earth. He came to do God's will and willingly set aside His own. This is exactly what God is seeking from His brethren.

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient (even) unto death, yea, the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; 10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of (things) in heaven and (things) on earth and (things) under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:5-11

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

In order to submit to God we must resist the one who seeks to keep us in rebellion against Him. The term "*resist*" is the same term that was used earlier to describe God's opposition to the proud.

antitássœ; from antí (473), against, and tássœ (5021), to arrange. To set an army in array against, to arrange in battle order. In the NT, antitássomai is used metaphorically to set oneself in opposition to or in array against, to resist (Acts 18:6; Rom 13:2; James 4:6; 5:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Sept.: Prov 3:34).

(Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:498)

Just as God opposes the proud, the true servant of the Lord must oppose the devil. Since this was originally a military term, it reveals that Satan and God are on different sides and we must choose our side. This is a battle, and we must set ourselves in opposition against the devil. If we are to conquer the power that Satan holds in our lives, we must resist and oppose the temptations he places before us. Paul revealed some of the things we can do to resist him.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; Eph. 6:10-23

If we will put on this whole armor of God we will have the tools necessary to resist the devil as James described here. The Spirit of God promised us that if we resist the devil, he will “flee.”

“pheugo... to flee, i.e. a. to flee away, seek safety by flight: absol. ... b. metaph. to flee(to shun or avoid by flight) something abhorrent, esp. vices: ... c. to be saved by flight, to escape safe out of danger... d. poetically, to flee away i. q. to vanish... “ (Thayer, p. 651; 5343)

pheugo "to flee from or away" (Lat., fugio; Eng., "fugitive," etc.), besides its literal significance, is used metaphorically, (a) transitively, of "fleeing" fornication, 1 Cor 6:18; idolatry, 10:14; evil doctrine, questionings, disputes of words, envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings, and the love of money, 1 Tim 6:11; youthful lusts, (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:5343)

As noted in the definition, it was used literally by Jesus of fleeing a place out of fear of destruction. But since this is the only place where it is used of Satan, we have to be careful. Some will describe him fleeing in fear of a strong Christian with his armor on, but that may be carrying this term further than it is intended. The Devil is depicted elsewhere as someone we should fear and not the opposite.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 1Pet. 5:8-9

No one could resist the devil better than Jesus, yet though he did depart from him, it was only to wait for a better opportunity in the future.

Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. Lk. 4:13

This appears to be the furthest we would want to carry this figure. Yet the passage is given to offer hope for victory. If we resist, we will win and the battle will end in our foe withdrawing and us standing victorious in that confrontation. Yet the verse is not here to create any overconfidence. We should always fear and have an awe when it comes to the power of this great adversary and foe. Respect for the word of God and the concept of authority keeps one from going very far.

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Jude 1:9

The devil has a position of authority. We should fear him, we should resist him and know in our hearts that our confidence is in the power of the weapons God has given us to use against him.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. 2Cor. 10:3-6

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

Another command (imperative mode) with a promise now follows the other. Since God can only be as close to each of us as we allow Him, it will always be our own initiative that will bring Him as close as possible. James has already described how we are to draw near to Him. We must repudiate all friendship with this world, become humble so God can give us more grace, and resist the devil who is the enemy of God. The more we remove ourselves from these hindrances, the closer we can be to God and this will allow God to respond.

“eggizo... 1. trans. to bring near, to join one thing to another... 2. intrans. to draw or come near, to approach... in Sept. used esp. of the priests entering the temple to offer sacrifices or to perform other ministrations there... to worship God... to turn one’s thoughts to God, to become acquainted with him...”
(Thayer, 164; 1448)

This is exactly what Abraham did. Everything God asked him to do, he did it to the very best of his ability and at the end of his life, he became the only man that God called his friend. If we want God to consider us his friend and allow him to draw close to us, we have to remove all the things that would force him away from us.

We live in the midst of those who have chosen to live their lives out of the presence of the Lord. The pressure is always there to imitate them. We see the danger after the sons of God chose to marry the daughters of men and we soon had every imagination of the thoughts of men’s heart evil continually. If we truly want to draw near to God, we must set aside this life as a priority and seek those things that are above where Christ is seated. Life becomes so much simpler when we learn to submit to God. As more and more of our life is turned over to God, it becomes easier and easier to do all God asks. The real difficulty is found by those Christians who don’t fulfill the above commands. They keep just enough of the world to constantly have trouble.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners;

This is not the direction we might have thought James would move after speaking of resisting the devil and drawing near to God. Is this a rebuking of a certain class of Christians here, or is this part of the process of drawing near to God? When he calls out to sinners is this only a certain class or group or should we all heed this call? After carefully studying the first few verse of 1 John, we have the answer.

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:5-10

A normal part of walking in the light is confessing our sins and of course prior to that by repenting of them. If we are not confessing, we are not being forgiven and we are not drawing near to God. We are all sinners and we are all in need of cleansing our hands. If we can’t see that, then we are deceiving ourselves. This is not a specific rebuke to an evil group of Christians, but a clarion call to all Christians. This is all part of drawing near to God and to humbling ourselves in the sight of God. It is also the real heart of drawing near to God and also of resisting the devil. There is nothing high or noble here. We are constantly looking for committed sin and whenever we find it, we “cleanse” it.

“katharizo... to make clean, to cleanse... ; a. from physical stains and dirt... to remove by cleansing... b. in a moral sense; aa. to free from the defilement of sin and from faults; to purify from wickedness... bb. to free from the guilt of sin, to purify... cc. to consecrate by cleansing or purifying... to consecrate, dedicate... 2. to pronounce clean in a levitical sense...” (Thayer, p. 312; 2511)

The cleansing of the hands is another way of saying get your life cleansed. There is only way to get free from the defilement of sin and its guilt, we must repent of all sins and make up our minds that we will forever remove them from our lives. It certainly requires a resisting of the devil and the

temptations he casts in front of us. It also requires that we remove the veneer from sin and see it for what it is, a rebelling against God, a drawing near to the devil, a giving in to lusts, and the rebellion they cause, and it makes us a friend to the world and an enemy of God. There is no path to draw near to God but a path of continued repentance, contrition, and confession.

The LORD is near them that are of a broken heart and contrite spirit. Ps. 34:18

I dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit. Isa. 57:15

To this man will I look; to him that is poor and has a contrite spirit and that trembles at my word Isa. 66:2

All sin separates us from God and He can't hear us until we remove it.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity. Isa. 59:1-3

This is why becoming acutely aware of this and continually searching for it is one of our greatest lines of defense. These things must be cleansed. We must get rid of them. James uses a different term for "sin:"

"harmartolos... devoted to sin, a sinner ... In the NT distinctions are so drawn that one is called hamartolos who is a. not free from sin. In this sense all men are sinners... b. pre-eminently sinful, especially wicked... a. univ... Jas 4:8... b. Spec., of men stained with certain definite vices or crimes, e. g. the tax-gatherers..." (Thayer, p. 31; 268)

Since this most often refers to those who are devoted to sin, pre-eminently sinful or especially wicked, we are again forced to question whether James is singling out the weaker Christians here, or is he expecting us to say "Is he talking about me?" Do I fit this description. Clearly as blood bought servants of the Lord by grace the answer is "no." But if we are speaking of what I have actually done since obeying the gospel and thinking of what more might have been done, we should all be saying:

And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. 10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" Lk. 17:7-10

Anyone who compares themselves to Jesus and all that he performed would have to admit that there absolute truth to this parable and its application. In this respect James could speak to any Christian in this manner.

and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

The term "purify" is very close in meaning to "cleanse" above. It is defined:

"hagnizo... to purify; 1. ceremonially... to cleanse themselves from levitical pollution by means of prayers, abstinence, washings, sacrifices... the pass. has a reflexive force, to take upon one's self a purification... 2. morally..." (Thayer, 7; 48)

Instead of the hands, he now focuses on the heart. The heart is to be cleansed, purified or made holy. It is to become the dwelling place of God. If we want God to dwell within our hearts, if we want Him to draw near to us and bless us, then we must make our hearts a place where He is comfortable. The heart is the center of our being. For a fuller definition of the term see notes on 1:26. But carefully consider the shortened definition:

"kardia,... 2. univ. kardia denotes the seat and centre of all physical and spiritual life; and a. the vigor and seat of physical life... b. the centre and seat of spiritual life, the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affection, purposes, endeavors... BB ... the faculty and seat of intelligence... GG of the will and character... the seat of the sensibilities, affections,

emotions, desires, appetites, passions... (Thayer, p. 325-326; 2588).

The heart is the seat, essence and center of all that is man. It is where all decisions, plans, desires, emotions, purposes reside. It must be cleansed for it is from the heart that all sin proceeds:

“Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 “These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.” Matt 15:17-20

In the midst of the lusts of the flesh, works of the flesh, deeds of the body and workings of the old man, we will all find the weaknesses and sins that still plague us. They are in our hearts because we opened the door to them in our youth and once present they are very difficult if not impossible to eradicate. We must cleanse this part of our being if we are to ever truly be near to the Lord.

James here calls them (and us?) doubleminded! This term is defined:

“dipsuchos... double-minded; a. wavering, uncertain, doubting... b. divided in interests sc between God and the world: Jas 4:8... (Thayer, 153)

Are we double-minded? Do we waver and doubt in our hearts in the realm of sin? When it comes to our lusts and desires whenever we waver and see sin as an enjoyment that tempts us instead of a wicked and vile thing that could separate us from God forever, we are clearly manifesting a double-mindedness. All who are sinners must first be double-minded because when the spirit is willing and the flesh is weak, we reflect our double-mindedness.

Those who hear the commands above at services and get excited about them and make up their minds to do them, then when they leave and find the temptations just too strong to fight against are double-minded. They cannot make up their minds what is the most important. James is clear here as to what they must do. Think about it!

While many would reserve these words not for all Christians, but only for those who are still weak and are not growing, it again seems safer to see this as the normal attribute of the Christian that we need to work to overcome. Even if we have been a Christian for many years, and have conquered many lusts and sinful desires we still have to add in all the things that James is leading to when he says, *“to him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.”*

9 Lament and mourn and weep! 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep;

Here is the nature of true repentance. We don't feel these emotions all the time, but whenever we need to cleanse our hands or purify our hearts, these are the emotions that need to be present. It is not just a little remorse of a small amount of sorrow. These are the deep feelings one ought to have whenever they find themselves in the condition spoken of above and know that they are a sinner.

“talaiporeo... to toil heavily, to endure labors and hardships; to be afflicted; to feel afflicted and miserable: Jas 4:9... b. in Grk. writ... to afflict...” (Thayer, 613; 5003)

Since this is in the middle voice, it is something we make ourselves feel whenever we need to cleanse ourselves. We need to feel the feelings similar to those after working hard all day to the point of exhaustion. We need to feel afflicted and miserable. We are in a sorry state and need to feel bad about it. We also need to mourn, which refers to the sorrow we feel over the terrible condition they are in.

We also need to mourn, which is the same term Jesus used when he said, *“blessed are they that mourn.”*

pentheo to experience sadness or grief as the result of depressing circumstances or the condition of persons - 'to be sad, to grieve for, to weep for, sorrow, grief.' ...” (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:3996).

This is the time for mourning. When we need our hands cleansed and our hearts purified. In

addition, we will need to “weep.”

“*klaio*, ... to mourn, weep, lament;... to weep for, mourn for, bewail one...” (Thayer, p. 347).

This are natural reactions to the sinful things God condemns so strongly. They are the proper and natural state of man if they we not hardened their hearts. If we feel these emotions, then there is great hope for us. If we crush them, and not act upon them, then we will never draw near to God, never submit to God and never resist the devil.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

The Spirit of God does not let go of this until He has fully expressed how critical the proper emotions of repentance and godly sorrow are manifested. When there is sin in the camp or in the heart, it is a time for great sorrow and gloom. It is not wrong to allow one’s joy and mirth to be changed into mourning and gloom after we have sinned. It is good and natural and we are blessed if we do it. It is certainly not a sign of spiritual immaturity. Whenever we have sinned, God is not laughing, and it is not a time for us to be laughing either. We should be “*mourning*” over any condition of weakness that has not yet been repented of and forgiven.

“*pentheo*... to mourn ... b. ... to mourn for, lament, one...” (Thayer, 500; 3996) “

We ought to love God enough to grieve when we are not as close to Him as we could be with no one to blame but ourselves. Every time we are brought face to face with sin, we are to mourn and sorrow and grieve. We need to be capable and willing to “turn” or change our state.

“*metastrepho*... to turn about, turn around...” (Thayer, 406; 3344)

“*metastrepho*... to cause a change of state, with emphasis upon the difference in the resulting state - 'to change to, to turn into, to cause to be different from, to transform.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon Based NT:3344)

All joy, regardless of outward circumstances should immediately be turned to “gloom” any time we realize we have just sinned. It is not a casual moment.

“*katepheia*... prop. a downcast look expressive of sorrow; hence shame, dejection, gloom, [A. V. heaviness]...” (Thayer, 340; 2726)

katepheia probably denotes a downcast look, expressive of sorrow; hence, "dejection, heaviness"; it is used in James 4:9....” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:2726)

katepheia ... a state of mental gloominess and dejection - 'gloom, depression.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:2726)

Our term depression fairly well fits this Greek term. We should be ashamed, dejected and filled with gloom over the prospects of meeting our God in an unprepared condition. Remember he is speaking to the worldly church member, the weak on who is double-minded and not giving himself completely to God.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight (*presence* NASB) of the Lord,

This is the second of three times that James will emphasize the difference between the proud and the humble. He spoke of it in verse six when he contrasted the wars and fightings of those who are envious because of a proud and selfish midset that doesn’t allow them to see the harm they are causing. God’s promise there was that if we can become humble enough to recognize the world does not exist for our selfish uses, He can give us grace. But if we continue to remain proud, He will have no choice but to resist and battle against us.

Here the humility stems from our desire to submit to God and recognize that we are under His authority and His will for our lives is far better than our selfish and short-sighted one. If we can recognize the importance of humility it will ultimately lead to our being placed in a far greater position than if we had sought out our own glory. This time he uses the verb instead of the noun.

“*tapeinoo*... to make low, bring low... a. to level, reduce to a plain... b. metaph. to bring into a humble condition, reduce to meaner circumstances; i.e. a. to assign a lower rank or place to; to abase... c. to

lower, depress, [Eng. humble]:... one's soul, bring down one's pride... to have a modest opinion of one's self, to behave in an unassuming manner devoid of all haughtiness..." (Thayer p 614)

This was a theme that Jesus spoke of many times in His ministry. We must bring ourselves down to our true level and see ourselves in our own failure and folly before we can come to God empty enough for Him to fill. When we can see ourselves as a part of God's creation, created for His purposes, then we can become truly great and useful for Him.

Jesus spoke of the humility of children who recognize they are under the authority of their parents and teachers and made it clear that only when we see our relationship to God as these children can we become great in the kingdom of Heaven.

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever **humbles** himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. Mt. 18:1-5*

Jesus also contrasted the terrible pride of the scribes and Pharisees with His own expectations of His servants. Their pride made them short sighted and therefore of little value to God. His servants must see themselves clearly. We are over no one and no abilities, accomplishments or mastery can ever lead us to be more than brethren to one another. Only those who humble themselves now as He did, can be exalted in the world to come.

*But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be **humbled**, and he who **humbles** himself will be exalted. Mt. 23:5-12*

Jesus also spoke two parables in Luke to emphasize the importance of being humble and seeing ourselves as servants of God with nothing special about ourselves. The first was at a wedding feast where the self-importance of some of the guests had led them to pick the seats that they thought belonged to them. But when the one who invited all to the feast arrives, he might see things differently and move them lower. So also Jesus warns will God do on the day of judgement and only those who have been humble here will be exalted then.

*So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be **humbled**, and he who **humbles** himself will be exalted." Lk. 14:7-11*

*Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be **humbled**, and he who **humbles** himself will be exalted." Lk. 18:9-14*

Paul used this same term to describe the mind of Jesus Christ while He served God on earth. Since He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, we too need to learn to have the same mind.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a

*bondsman, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled** Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:5-11*

Humility is thus the recognition that this is God's world. He is the Creator and His will ultimately will be done. If we submit and help Him, we will be exalted on the last day. We have nothing that we did not receive. They are all gifts of God and we are to use them for His glory and to help serve others.

As Paul told the Corinthians and the Romans, all that we have either in ability and material attributes, or in spiritual growth and development, were gifts God gave to each of us at our birth. There is nothing we have that we did not receive and we should not act like we are somehow precious and special because we have them.

that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us — and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! 1Cor. 4:6-9

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us Rom. 12:3-6

Peter plainly states that they are all gifts and they were given to minister to each other. Again, no matter what innate special attributes we have, or the opportunities God has given us to serve, they were all gifts that we should praise God and humble ourselves in His sight because without Him, we would have and be nothing.

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1Pet. 4:10-11

When we can finally see these things clearly, it will be safe for God to bless us with other things. Paul had to be humbled before he could become great, so must we.

and He will lift you up. (exalt you. NASB)

The term “*lift up*” forms the heart of this phrase.

“hupsoo... to lift up on high, to exalt... metaph... to raise to the very summit of opulence and prosperity... simply TINA, to exalt, to raise to dignity, honor, and happiness...” (Thayer, 647; 5312)

God can only exalt those who humble themselves, who recognize their sins and mourn over them who seek to resist the devil and to draw near to God in humble submission to His commands. This can be done through answered prayers, providence, and the judgement of being worthy of life.

James is going to make two powerful applications on the basis that we have agreed to the above truths. These things he now commands follow naturally from the above truths.

- * The humble servant of the Lord will not presume to speak evil of or judge his brother (11-12).
- * The humble servant of the Lord will not presume to plan for the future outside of the will of his Lord (13-17).

11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren.

It is interesting and important to note that James returns to this subject for the third time in his short book. The Spirit of God has already revealed us that we must bridle our tongue if our religion is to

be of any value (1:26). James also gave one of the most comprehensive and instructive passages anywhere in the Scripture (3:1-10), on the variety of dangers the tongue can place us in and the horrible damage it has done and continues to do in our world.

The fact that it is repeated again by the Spirit, manifests the extreme danger of where the tongue places us. The same envy that causes fights and wars also leads us to say terrible things about one another and only our own humility and recognition of our true place in God's plan can protect us. We are commanded (Greek Imperative) not to speak "*against one another*."

"*kata-laleo* to speak against one, to criminate, traduce..." (Thayer, 322; 2635)

"*kata-laleo*, "to importune someone with speeches," "to prattle something to someone.... "to blurt out"... esp. "to speak against, to accuse, someone," with a suggestion of the false and exaggerated: "to calumniate"... in the LXX ... "to scorn," "to mock at"... "to revile" "to calumniate" the main emphasis is on the hostility denoted by *kata-* whether against God, his servant Moses, or frequently ones neighbor... In the NT... the only emphasis and content of the group is that of speaking evil against one's neighbor... The essence of the matter is probably to be sought in the KATA-, I.e., in the hostility and malice of speech directed against one's neighbor.... uncharitableness rather than its falsity..." (Kittel, Vol 4 p 3-4)

The root term "*- laleo*" simply means to speak. It is in the prefix "*kata-*" that the sin arises. We are allowed to speak of our neighbor as long as the golden rule is observed. As long as the law of love, kindness and concern is being observed, then speaking of others can be a good and wholesome activity. It is the means of bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

But it is so easy that this fountain having put forth some sweet water can then move to putting forth the bitter as well. How often does a conversation that began with good intentions of speaking only good of someone degenerate into speaking evil. Where is the line? "*kata-*" When it drops to prattling, blurring out secrets, speaking against, scorning, mocking, belittling and just generally being uncharitable and unkind, then we must stop, or we must stop the one doing it in our presence.

A most difficult yet important question to ask ourselves centers on the line between concerned speaking about the faults of another and speaking evil of another. The line centers on *agape* - love. If we are truly acting in their best interests in this discussion, and only seeking help then all is well, but if we are passing on information only for the excitement of passing it on, then it is sin. When speaking of our brethren, we must be exceedingly careful that we do not violate this command. There is no excuse for speaking evil about another member of the Lord's church. It simply should not happen. The command here is that it does not happen.

"*allelon*... one another; reciprocally, mutually..." (Thayer, p. 28; 240)

He who speaks evil of (*against* NASB) a brother and (*or* - NASB) judges his brother,

As James moves to his next point, he repeats the speaking against, then adds judging. This is very helpful in determining when we are crossing the line from right into wrong. If our conversation ever crosses into having to pass some type of judgement on a brother, then it is evil. When speaking about a brother or sister requires us to draw conclusions that we have no way of knowing, then we are first "*judging*" and then "*speaking evil*" of them.

"*krino*... 1. to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose... 2. to approve, esteem... 3. to be of opinion, deem, think... 4. to determine, resolve, decree... 5. to judge; a. to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong... Pass. to be judged, i.e. summoned to trial that one's case may be examined and judgement passed upon it,... b. to pronounce judgment; to subject to censure; of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in the matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others..." (Thayer, p. 361-362; 2919)

Judging a brother requires us to determine, resolve or decree something about his conduct. We then pronounce an opinion concerning the rightness or wrongness of what they have done. When we make these types of assessments on the words or deeds of others, then we are judging them. We are not to judge because God commands us not to do it. We can assess conduct on the basis

of God's Word, but we cannot make our own judgements. We are not equipped to do it. Those who do:

This is such a complicated passage. One fraught with danger on both sides. Carried too far to one extreme, we could never disfellowship, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, convict the gainsayer, mark the false teacher, or refuse the factious man.

Carried too far to the other extreme of not keeping it would allow us to gossip, pass any and all judgements on the conduct and character and pass those opinions on freely to others. This verse has to mean something, but our understanding cannot conflict with other commands. These are the commands that must be approached with the most caution. They are the most dangerous for the Christian. Here more than anywhere else the "when in doubt don't..." attitude will protect us. When we are commanded to pass judgment, we will pass it, as we are when sin is committed, or error is preached, then we will content ourselves to point out their own violation of the law as we have been commanded.

When we are commanded not to judge, then we will refuse to speak evil or judge a brother in that area. Even Jesus demanded that we never judge unless we are commanded to do so. This passage is very clear and specific. We are not to judge at all! That makes it simple. Now only when I am commanded to judge am I safe to do so. If there is not command to judge then we must never do it!

"Do not judge lest you be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Mt. 7:1-5

"And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Lk 6:37

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." Jn. 7:24

Paul makes it clear that in the realm of those matters where God has not given any specific command for or against something, we are commanded not to judge and not to speak evil of someone who does not measure up to our own views of that matter.

Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. Rom 14:3-4

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." 12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. Rom 14:10-13

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. 1 Cor 4:5

God could not have been any clearer! We are not to pass judgment on any brother over matters where God has not spoken. Since the law changed, God no longer had anything to say about the Sabbath, food distinctions, feast days, or other matters he has left to each individual to decide for himself. In Romans 14 and 1Cor. 8-10, Paul lists many of these things. They are liberties that some enjoy and others forego, but neither side is right or wrong regardless of what they decide to do with it. Every general command God has placed in the Scriptures gives each Christian the right to choose how to fulfill it. No one has the right to speak evil of or judge a brother in these realms.

The simplest solution is the best. Unless we are commanded to judge we won't. Unless we are forced to act or speak we don't. This is not a contradiction but a serious limitation. When Jesus

commanded that if our brother sins against us, we must go and show him his fault, then we must judge. But since sin is the transgression of God's law, and it can't be a sin unless it is a command that has been violated.

speaks evil of (against - NASB) the law

James has already spoken of the law of liberty twice and there is no reason to think he is speaking of the Old Law here.

*But he who looks into **the perfect law of liberty** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. Jas. 1:25*

*So speak and so do **as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.** Jas. 2:12*

*For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** has made me free from the law of sin and death. Rom. 8:2*

*so fulfill **the law of Christ.** Gal. 6:2*

Jesus Christ is the one who gave these commands. If we do not abide under them, then we are manifesting a flagrant lack of respect for the law of Christ. We are actually speaking against it. One the one side is Jesus saying Don't judge and on the other is the Christian who is judging and not repenting for doing it. In that act he is not only speaking down the Christian, but also the law that forbids it.

Those who would rather argue that there is nothing wrong with what they have done instead of repenting and admitting what they did was a sin and a violation of Jesus law are manifesting the same arrogance and lack of humility as was condemned above. If we are truly filled with agape-love, we would never do such things.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Cor 13:4-7

While few Christians would say it is a bad law, or an unfair law, or a ridiculous law, that does not allow us to be rude, think evil, or assume evil motives against another, if we easily set it aside with no remorse of repentance, then that is what we have done in practice.

and judges the law.

This is an even graver charge. God gave the law of Christ to be obeyed, and those who submit to Him do so without question. Those with questions, or even worse those who take it upon themselves to decide which laws will apply to them and which ones do not have gone a step beyond rebellion. We are back into pride and arrogance again. God is the Creator, God is the law giver and the judge. No mere human could possibly judge God's law and decide which ones to keep and which ones to reject. To even consider that we might be able to do it takes great pride and no humility. Jesus has already said what will happen to anyone who rejects him or does not receive any of His sayings.

48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. (Jn 12:48-49).

If we speak evil of or pass judgement on this law, mark it up and keep only what we desire we are acting in a very foolish manner. Jesus still has the original document on heaven. It is the original document in heaven that will judge us, not the marked up Bibles of today.

But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

In our society, we have judges whose job it is to judge laws. to decide whether laws should be kept or not. Such are the judges on America's supreme court. They determine whether laws are fair, constitutional and fairly meted out. If they determine that a law is not fair, or was not fairly

administered, they are empowered to overturn the case. In some cases they can even free the person who has been charged. Though nations need people with this type of power, God does not. God needs people who will keep His law. People who will humbly submit to all His commandments. Though our own society may deem some laws unconstitutional, decreeing that no one else need keep them, a Christian can not do it. Any Christian who does to the law of Christ, what these judges are doing does not comprehend the chain of authority and submission.

The only role for any law in the life of a Christian is to do and submit fully to it. When we comply with His laws, we are a law doer or a law keeper. But if we have decided that we have the strength, wisdom and ability to judge which of God's laws need to be kept and which ones can be set aside, we have placed ourselves on an equality with God himself as judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver, (and Judge NASB) who is able to save and to destroy.

God is the Lawgiver and His Son Jesus Christ is the Mediator who gave it to us.

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. ... 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Heb 8:6, 10

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; Heb 1:1-2

At the end of these days God speaks to us through His new covenant of which His Son the mediator. Now God is writing His laws in our heart through the Spirit.

clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. 2 Cor 3:3

With only God giving this law, and the Spirit and Jesus working with Him, the rest of us are only law - keepers not "lawgivers."

"nomothetes... (nomos and tithemi), a lawgiver..." (Thayer, 427; 3550)

This lawgiver has the ability to both save those who keep it and destroy those who do not. There is only one who can do this. Therefore we must submit to Him and not find ways to rebel by thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought. And deciding which laws we will keep and which ones we will set aside. This is especially true when we remember:

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. Jas. 2:10-13

It doesn't matter what law we violate, we are still transgressors of the whole law. If we don't like what God said about any topic, we have only one choice. We either submit because He is God and we are humble enough to recognize that none of these laws are given except for our own good. Even the Law of Moses had that as its standard! How much more the law of Christ.

And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. 25 Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.' Deut. 6:24-25

We may not understand why, but every command, ordinance and expectation stated in the Scriptures is for our good and must be obeyed for it to be righteousness for us. If we refuse we don't have God any longer.

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 2Jn. 9

Without God, we have no hope. If we don't trust Him or if we are not humble enough to submit to Him, Only God is "able" to save or destroy. It is folly to refuse submission and trust in Him.

"dunamai... to be able, have power, whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom... to be able to do something... to be able, capable, strong, powerful..." (Thayer, p. 158-159; 1410)

God has the power and the ability to save those who keep His law to His satisfaction and to destroy those who do not. Jesus used this same powerful truth in the gospels:

"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! Lk 12:4-5

James speaks of the other side as well. If we submit to God and keep his commands, He has the power and ability to save. But if we reject His commands He has the power to destroy. discusses both God's ability to destroy and to save.

"sozo... to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction (opp. to APOLLUMI)... a. univ., TINA ... one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing) e. g. one suffering from disease to make well, heal, restore to health: to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save (i.e. to rescue)... b. to save in the technical biblical sense; negatively, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment,... to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance..." (Thayer, p. 610-611; 4982)

Those who in pride and arrogance judge for themselves which parts they will keep and which parts they will not keep will be "destroyed."

"apoleia,... 1. actively, a destroying, utter destruction... 2. passively, a perishing, ruin, destruction... in particular, the destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life, eternal misery, perdition, the lot of those excluded from the kingdom of God." (Thayer, p. 70-71; 684)

Who are you to judge another (your neighbor NASB)?

Who do we think we are if we do such a thing? What are we making of ourselves? When we elevate ourselves to the position of God, can we really believe that God will be pleased with our service? We have been commanded again and again not to Judge! We are to be humble human beings with enough difficulty living the Christian life ourselves, that we do not dare to pass any other judgements on others than we are specifically commanded to do. Who would we be making ourselves if we decide in spite of all this to judge our brother anyway? At this point every true child of God who is guilty of this ought to be hanging their head in shame. We ought to remember something Paul told the Corinthians when they were doing a similar thing with foods offered to idols. Are we stronger than He?

Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? 1 Cor 10:20-22

13 Come now, you who say,

"Come now" is made up of the imperative (command) Come! It may be an idiom like our "come on now!" or "oh come on!" which we often use to express a strong disbelief at the assertion or belief of another. While the term "come" generally means moving to a physical location, it can also be used as it is here for mental location.

"age, ageite properly imperative of ago used as Adverb Come! Come on! Well! ..." (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:33)

As an imperative command, it is forcing those who are thinking such thoughts to draw near to hear what James has to say. By adding "now," he adds urgency to the command. This needs to be done immediately.

"nun... adv. now ... 1. adv. of Time, now, i. e. at the present time; ... it stands in a conclusion or

sequence; as things now are, as the matter now stands; under these circumstances; in the present state of affairs; since these things are so; as it is..." (Thayer, p. 430; 3596)

It was used twice in a similar way in the Old Testament.

I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also was vanity. Eccl. 2:1-2

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; 20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword;" For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isa. 1:18-20

For the thinking Christian, who recognizes the sovereignty of God and the fragility of life such a statement could never be verbalized or thought. No wise and humble Christian would make a statement that expresses either control or power over any aspect of our lives. Those who have humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God recognize the folly of such a statement. We simply do not have this kind of dominion. This is something that only God can do. So if we have ever said such a thing we are now compelled to come before the Holy Spirit to hear His verdict on all such thoughts or words.

"Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit" (engage in business and make a profit. NASB)"

At first glance, the statement does not really appear too far out of line. We all might be asked: "What are you going to do today? and answer "Today I am going to..." We could also be asked: "What are you going to do tomorrow?" and again we might answer: "Tomorrow I am going to..."

Those who work and live among those in the world will now really see much if any problem with these words. Because this is clearly the philosophy and attitude of all worldly people who do not believe or trust in God. First, it makes the flawed assumption that what happened today is exactly what is going to happen tomorrow. Life just continues on as it always has. Yet this is the very thing Peter had warned against.

knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 2Pet. 3:3-7

It is also the exact opposite of how Paul told us think whenever we consider something that is to happen in the future. The Second coming of Christ is going to come without warning and we must always be prepared for it.

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 1Th. 5:1-5

It can't overtake us as a thief because we are always ready and prepared for it to happen and our thinking and planning for the future is prefaced with this understanding. We don't know what tomorrow will bring and we are not looking at the continuation of this life in this way.

Second, it fails to consider or take into consideration that we are no longer our own, but have been bought with a price. We have a master who is in control of all things and before we make any statements about what we are going or not going to do we have to take into consideration that God also has plans for our lives which may not include what we want. And that is the essential issue with this statement. It marks out the difference between those who are proud and those who are humble. The more humble we become the more we will recognize our own insignificance in this

world. We did not choose when we were born, we have no control over the health or weaknesses of our body, We do not know when we are going to die, and we have absolutely no control over any of the events of this world.

Hence to make the statement “**TODAY** or **TOMORROW** We **SHALL** go to **THIS** city, **SPEND** a year there, **BUY** and **SELL** and make a **PROFIT**,” is far too proud and arrogant for any true servant of the Lord to say them. If we want to be truly humble and submissive servants of the Lord, we must stop thinking and saying things in this way.

We have no control over today or tomorrow, so to speak of any future event as though we have such control is where the problem begins. This is what James is going to reveal to us and force us to take into consideration whenever we are speaking about the future. Everyone one of these verbs are in the future tense and are assumptions based on our ability and are therefore completely inappropriate for a Christian to say.

We can make the plans, but we have to submit them to the Lord and allow Him to determine what will actually occur. Choosing which city we are going to be and expressing exactly what is going to happen while there is the root of the problem.

They are going to “*carry out and execute*” the plans that are in their mind.

poieo... II *to do*... i.e. to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind... a. univ., with adverbs describing the mode of action... with nouns which denote a command, or some rule of action POIO signifies *to carry out, to execute*... in bibl. Grk. to *do* the law, meet its demands... weith nouns describing a plan or course of action, *to perform, accomplish*...” (Thayer, p. 524-527; 4160)

While there, they have it fixed in their minds that they are to “*trade - buy and sell*.” Using the term from which we get “*emporium*.”

emporeuomai... (from *emporos* which see); to go a trading, to travel for business, to traffic, trade (Thucydides and following; the Sept.): James 4:13...” (Thayer's, NT:1710)

emporeuomai... to carry on a business involving buying and selling - 'to be in business, to engage in a business, to trade, business.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT 1710)

They also have it in their minds that all this trading is going to end with gain.

kerdaino ... to gain by means of one's activity or investment - 'to earn, to gain, to make a profit.' ... 'we shall go into business and make a profit' James 4:13; (from Greek-English Lexicon NT:2770)

kerdaino ... to gain by means of one's activity or investment - 'to earn, to gain, to make a profit.' 'we shall go into business and make a profit' James 4:13; ... 'he invested his money (literally 'he did business with them') and earned another five' Matt 25:16; ; 'what will a person accomplish if he gains the whole world but is himself lost or must suffer for it?' Luke 9:25. ... 'your mina ... has earned five minas' Luke 19:18...” (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:2770)

Thus the entire statement is one of control and power that can only be made by one who holds his own destiny in his hand. To make this statement literally we would have to know that we are not going to die and not going to get sick, the Lord is not going to return, the world is going to be what it is today, no plans are not going to change, the city will still be there, and we will have the power to make that a profit and not a loss.

Truly humble people recognize that they have no control over any of these things. “*spending a year there*” stresses control over time and life. “*make a profit*” stresses control over success and failure.

14 whereas (yet - NASB) you do not know what will happen (what your life will be like - NASB) tomorrow.

This is the truth that all men must acknowledge if they are to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. As human beings, we have no idea what our life will be like tomorrow. There is absolutely no way for us to know what tomorrow will be like. James captures this with the term “*whereas*” which infers the consequence or reason why the above statement should not have been

made.

“*hostis*...2. it refers to a single person or thing, but so that regard is had to a general notion or class to which this individual person or thing belongs, and thus it indicates quality: *one who, such as one as, of such a nature that*... 3. Akin to the last usage is that whereby it serves to give a reason, *such as equiv. to seeing that he, inasmuch as he*... 4. Acc to a later Greek usage it is put for the interrogative *tis* in direct questions...” (Thayer, p. 457; 3748)

This term gives “a general notion” or “reason” and could also be translated “seeing that” or “inasmuch as.” So this is the true reason why such statements should never be made. The simple truth is that no one knows the future or what will happen tomorrow.

Will a natural disaster forever change all the we know and have? Will a man made disaster change everything? Will I die, will I become disabled, will the Lord return? We just don’t know and we need to become humble enough to admit it. The term “know” is defined:

epistamai ... a: to possess information about, with the implication of an understanding of the significance of such information - 'to know.' (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:1987)

epistamai ... c. inf. to know how to do, to be able to do, capable of doing, Hom., Att. 2. to be assured or believe that a thing is, II. c. acc. to understand a matter, know, be versed in or acquainted with, Hom., etc.: -after Hom. to know as a fact, know for certain, know well, Hdt., Att. (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1987)

This term is used less than 15 times in entire New Testament. As can be seen by the definitions, it is a term used for those who “*possess information and understand the significance of the information,*” or “*to understand a matter as a fact or certainty.*” One cannot turn their attention with this type of knowledge. As we say, “hindsight is 20/20!” We can see the past with certainty but the future is unseen. We cannot become acquainted with it. There is nothing to fix upon and nothing to become acquainted with. It is still a blank page with nothing written upon it. Only God knows how this page will be written.

For what is your life?

With “*gar* the reason and cause of a foregoing statement is added.”

The reason the above statements are so foolish is that our life has no permanency to it. We have no control over the day. We cannot keep our life. What is life? The term “what is defined:

“*poios*... of what nature? of what sort? Lat. *qualis*? used in questions: expressing surprise and anger,...” (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:4169)

What sort of life are we living, what is its essential nature and quality? What does it consist of and what is it made of? Is it a solid stable firm and fixed reality? No, after the curse and with the introduction of death, God now informs us of the nature of life, brace yourselves, this is a humbling statement:

It is even (You are {just} - NASB) a vapor that appears for a little time (while - NASB) and then vanishes away.

It is only a vapor. A mist, a fog, the white droplets of water that form in the cool of the morning or the steam that is coming off the boiling water.

atmis a hot steamy vapor - 'steam,' 'signs on the earth below; there will be blood and fire and steam' Acts 2:19. *atmis* is also used figuratively: 'for you are a vapor which appears for a moment' James 4:14. An important connotation in the use of the term *atmis* is the fact that it disappears so readily. This is a particularly significant element in James 4:14. The closest equivalent of *atmis* is normally a term which refers to the steam rising from a boiling pot or cauldron. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon Based NT 822)

He draws his own conclusion. It appears for a little time and then it is gone. The term “appear” is defined:

“*phaino*... to bring forth into the light, cause to shine; to show. in bibl. Grk. 1. ... to shine, shed light...”

a. *to shine, be bright or resplendent...* b. *to become evident, to be brought forth into light, come to view, appear...*" (Thayer, p. 647-648; 5316)

phaino ... signifies, in the active voice, "to shine"; in the passive, "to be brought forth into light, to become evident, to appear." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:5316)

It comes into view, you can see it, for a little while:

"*oligos...* *little, small, few*, of number, multitude, quantity, or size: joined to nouns... of time, *short*: ... of degree or intensity, *light, slight...* *in brief, briefly...*" (Thayer, p. 443; 3641)

Then it "vanishes:"

"*aphanizo...* a. *to snatch out of sight, to put out of view, to make unseen*, ... b. *to cause to vanish away, to destroy, consume...* c. *to deprive of lustre, render unsightly; to disfigure...*" (Thayer, 88; 853)

aphanizomai ... to cease to exist, with the implication of no longer being evident or visible - 'to cease to exist, to disappear, to die, disappearance...' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:853)

aphanizomai ... a: to become such as not to be seen - 'to become invisible' (in the passive, 'to disappear, to vanish'). 'you are like a mist that appears for a moment and then vanishes' James 4:14. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain, NT: 853)

Suddenly it is gone, without a trace. With a mist, it often doesn't even leave any water on the ground to mark its passing. This is God's definition of human life. It is the very heart and theme of Ecclesiastes and why life under the sun is so vain, and nothing in the gospel has changed this. We have no control over our life. We cannot extend it even by a cubit. Therefore we cannot control the future and are truly foolish to make plans on the basis that we can.

There are many passages in the Old Testament that teach similar things so this isn't something new for them. They should have known this.

Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. 5 Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah 6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them. Ps. 39:4-6

Boast not thyself of tomorrow; For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Pr. 27:1

But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You. 15 For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, As were all our fathers; Our days on earth are as a shadow, And without hope. 1Chron. 29:14-15

For He remembered that they were but flesh, A breath that passes away and does not come again. Ps. 78:39

15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and (also -NASB) do this or that."

The problem with the statements above and the solution to the problem is now offered. The term "instead" is defined:

"*anti...* 1. prop. it seems to have signified *over against, opposite to, before*, in a local sense... Hence 2. indicating exchange, successions, *for, instead of, in place of* (something). a. univ. *instead of...* b. of that *for* which anything is given received, endured..." (Thayer, p. 50; 473)

James now places the true and humble reality as properly stated in direct contrast to the improper statement of pride, arrogance, and illusion above. The main issue goes right back to earlier statements in this chapter.

6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ... 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

The pride in the statement of verse 13 is now contrast with the humility of this one. We need to bring the mighty hand of God into all calculations for the future. We need to consider His will in all our plans for the future.

“thelo... to will, (have in mind,) intend; i.e. 1. to be resolved or determined, to purpose ... 2. to desire, to wish:...” (Thayer p 285-286; 2309)

What does God have in mind, what does He intend? What does He desire and want? This is a critical question that all humble and submissive Christians never get far from. It is only if God wills that we will be “living” tomorrow:

“zao... to live... I prop. 1. to live, be among the living, be alive (not lifeless, not dead)... 2. to enjoy real life, i.e. to have true life and worthy of the name, --active, blessed, endless in the kingdom of god... 3. to live i. e. pass life, of the manner of living and acting; of morals or character...” (Thayer, p. 269-270; 2198)

Only God has the power and the control and we need to submit to His mighty hand. Jesus spoke often of the will of God and His presence here to fulfill it. Even the one who truly had dominion refused to speak the way worldly people do.

I am not sure if what James is after is our own desire that God give us what we think is best and not what we ourselves want or if he is more concerned about our will getting in the way of His. We need to be humble and submissive enough to want both of these things. We *“know that all things work together for good to those who love God,”* (Rom. 8:28), so we don't want anything that God doesn't want for us. One of the classic examples of this is Hezekiah, who seeks to impose his own desires over God's, and although God graciously gave him an extra 15 years of life, it was not better for Hezekiah as he thought it would be.

“Thus says the Lord: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'” 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, 3 and said, "Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 4 And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. Isa. 38:1-6

In those days Hezekiah was sick even unto death: and he prayed unto Jehovah; and he spake unto him, and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of Jehovah came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah. 2Chr. 32:24-26

One of Jesus parables speaks directly to this very issue.

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Lk. 12:16-21

16 But now (as it is - NASB,)you boast in your arrogance.

Here is the true nature of the problem. It is boasting, it is arrogance and pride to talk like that. The term “boast” is defined:

*kauchaomai ... Some Greek lexicons deduce it from *auchen* ... the neck, which vain persons are apt to carry in a proud manner (Ps. 75:5; Isa. 3:16). To boast, glory, exult, both in a good and bad sense. Used in an absolute sense (1 Cor 1:29,31; 4:7; 2 Cor 10:13,17; 11:18,30; 12:1,6,11; Gal 6:14; Eph 2:9). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:2744)*

*kauchaomai ... to speak loud, be loud-tongued, Pind.: to boast or vaunt oneself, c. inf., to boast that, Hdt.:c. acc. to boast of a thing, c. acc., N.T. From *kauche* ...” (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon, NT:2744)*

kauchaomai ... to express an unusually high degree of confidence in someone or something being exceptionally noteworthy - 'to boast.' 'whoever boasts must boast of the Lord' 1 Cor 1:31. 'your boasting is not right' 1 Cor 5:6. 'all such boasting is wrong' James 4:16. 'that is why we ourselves

boast about you in the churches of God' 2 Thess 1:4. 'this is how it is with the tongue: small as it is, it can boast about great things' James 3:5. Whether in any particular context the boasting is legitimate or not depends upon what is boasted about. In a number of languages, however, quite different terms are employed, depending upon the differing degrees of justification for such boasting. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT:2744)

This is clearly a boasting and taking glory in something that we have no reason to have and every reason not to have it. When someone says:

“Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”

It is idle boasting coming from a heart of “*arrogance*.” this statement is being made by a heart, whether in ignorance or not of having a confidence and pride without any basis. It is pretentious pride to say what they were saying. We have certainly made more of ourselves than we have any right to make if we think or talk like this.

alazoneia ... a state of pride or arrogance, but with the implication of complete lack of basis for such an attitude - 'false arrogance, pretentious pride, boastful haughtiness.' 'but now you are boasting in your pretentious pride' James 4:16. 'Pretentious pride' may be rendered as 'constantly talking about how great oneself is.'

alazon ... *alazoneia* 'pretentious pride,' one who is pretentiously proud and given to bragging about it - 'braggart, arrogant person. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:213)

alazon, alazoneia ... The *alazon* is the one who "makes more of himself" than the reality justifies, "ascribing to himself either more and better things than he has, or even what he does not possess at all"; who "promises what he cannot perform"; ... Very often the orator, philosopher, poet, magician, doctor, cook or officer is called *alazon* and especially the last of these ... as "arousing of the expectation of certain *agatha* ... which are not in fact there" A religious connotation is suggested by the link with *hubris*, which is always punished by the gods.(Kittel, TDWNT; NT:213)

All such boasting is evil.

It is a boast of arrogance because we are making a confident statement we have no power to perform. No one has control over any of the things mentioned above. Although related in meaning the definitions are slightly different.

“*kauchesis*... *the act of glorying*... ... crown of which we can boast... that of which one glories, cause of glorying...” (Thayer, p. 342; 2746)

“*kauchaomai, kauchema, kauchesis*,... the sense of *cauchasthai* is “to boast,” usually in a bad sense, which also attaches to *kauchema* and *kauchesis*. If there are occasions for the expression of legitimate pride, to Greek sensibility too loud a trumpeting of one’s own renown is a violation of - *aidos* and the sign of an *aneleutheros*. Warning against self-glory, and the ridiculing of it are common themes in popular philosophers and satirists... In the OT there are many proverbs against self-glorying or boasting... though places is also found for justifiable pride... Self-glorying, however is not merely a casual fault. In many passages it is regarded as the basic attitude of the foolish and ungodly man... For in it we see that man desires to stand on his own feet and not to depend on God, that he builds on that which he himself can accomplish and control...” Kittel Vol 3 p 645-646

The arrogance of the boaster is in his belief that he can stand on his own two feet and does not need God. Even in word it is a fatal flaw for the Christian to have this type of attitude. Therefore, this type of talk is “evil:”

“*poneros*... 2. *bad, of a bad nature or condition*; a. in a physical sense... b. in an ethical sense, *evil, wicked, bad*, etc. substantively *hoi poneroi. the wicked, bad men*, ... *ho poneros* is used pre-eminently of *the devil, the evil one*...” (Thayer, p. 530-531; 4190)

kakos [NT:2556] frequently means evil rather negatively, referring to the absence of the qualities which constitute a person or thing what it should be or what it claims to be. It is also used meaning evil in a moral sense. ... *poneros* [NT:4190] is a word at once **stronger and more active**, it means ***mischief-making, delighting in injury, doing evil to others, dangerous, destructive***. (Berry's Synonyms of the NT 4190)

But the *poneros* is, as Ammonius calls him, ο *drastikos kakou* = **the active worker out of evil**; ... 'aptness to do shrewd turns, to delight in mischiefs and tragedies; a loving to trouble our neighbour and to do him ill offices; crossness, perverseness, and peevishness of action in our intercourse' ... the *kakos* may be content to perish in his own corruption, but **the *poneros* is not content unless he is corrupting others as well, and drawing them into the same destruction with himself**. 'They sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away except they cause some to fall' (Prov 4:16). (Trench's Synonyms NT 4190)

This type of talking is dangerous and brings great harm. We need to do our absolute best to stay away from it. This is a tough one because we don't want it to turn into a vain repetition. Yet it needs to be kept in the forefront of our mind. When we are speaking of things in the future, we need to make certain we don't speak in absolutes but in relatives. It is good from time to time to even say "if the Lord wills" at some point in the conversation to make certain every one knows you feel that way.

17 Therefore, to him (one -NASB) who knows ({the} right thing NASB) to do good and does not do it,

With all the above clearly in mind, James now draws a conclusion. He uses the term *oun* - indicating that something follows from another necessarily," thus summing everything up. The only proper conclusion to be drawn from the above. Those who "know" to do good must do good. This time James selects "'*eido*... Latin *video*... which can *to see* or *to know*." So this is the term for the knowledge that we learn initially, then visualize and see it clearly in our minds eye. This follows closely the same line of reasoning the Hebrew writer chastised his readers.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Heb. 5:12-14

The time for them to see it initially and understand it well enough to teach it to others had passed. They were still "unskilled in the word of righteousness." But those who had pressed on had "*their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

These same people are now under consideration here. Once we reach this level of spiritual maturity this principle is also activated. Not only do we "know" to do good, but now we are responsible to do it.

Those who know how to do good and are skilled in knowing how to do good must do that good. Whenever we find a new piece of the puzzle of being godly we must put it on. This is all a part of the upward call of God.

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Phil. 3:14-16

The upward call of God demands that we do what we know is right, that to the degree that we have attained, we walk in it. The Scriptures define what is good and what is evil, but knowing to do good without doing it leads to sin.

to him it is sin.

Sin is a terrible word in the Scriptures. A term we generally attribute to those things that God has specifically commanded against. When we violate the positive and negative commands of God we know we have sinned. James here expands it out to all the things God has told us are good and we know we ought to be doing them. If we neglect to do them, then we have sinned.

"hamartia... a failing to hit the mark... a bad action, evil deed ... In the N. T. always in an ethical sense, and 1. equiv. to ... a sinning, whether it occurs by omission or commission, in thought and feeling or in speech and action... 2. that which is done wrong committed or resultant sin, an offense, a violation

of the divine law in thought or in act... 3. collectively, the complex or aggregate of sins committed either by a single person or by many..." (Thayer, p. 31; 266)

We have failed to hit the mark. It makes it wrong, and a violation of divine law. It becomes such a violation because this verse makes divine law any act or thing we know we ought to do because it is good and then we refuse to do it.

I believe the Holy Spirit is broadening out what James just did for us into infinity. James has taken the principle of submission and humility and applied it to the tongue and to our attitude to the future. It can also be applied to our conquering of lusts, adding on the spiritual fruits of the Spirit, being faithful to the Lord, etc., etc., and etc. As we grow in Christ we will continue to make new and exciting applications to the Word of God. As we do so, we must be prepared to do what these conclusions compel us to do. Only in this way is our faith growing and our lives changing and metamorphosing properly. It becomes a sin when we see where the next rung in the upward call is leading us to walk and we refuse to go there.

When we speak of these things, we generally divide them into two categories. There are sins of commission when we do what God has commanded us not to do. These things are evil because God has defined them as evil. All the works and lusts of the flesh are sins if we do them. Here we have what is generally called the sin of omission. It is also evil, when we know we are supposed to do something, but we don't do it. These can also fall into two groups. Those things we should have done, but didn't realize it at the time, but upon reflection, realize it was something good that we should have done. The second category are those who know they should do something, but they simply refuse to do so. Both are sins that need to be repented of and confessed.