

Friendship with the World

James 4:4-5

Introduction

1. James gave a characterization of pure and undefiled religion – **James 1:27** – keep oneself unspotted from the world.
 - a. Religion – *thrēskeia* – expression of devotion to transcendent beings (BDAG)
 - b. If your life is devoted to God in doing His word, it is to be separated from the world.
 - c. Unspotted – free from any and all defilement of the world.
2. As possessors of worldly wisdom, James' readers were failing to remain untainted by the world. Such was causing internal problems – **James 4:1-3** (NOTE: **"desires for pleasure that war in your members"** – cf. **Romans 6:13** – who/what will we serve?)
3. James used strong language to garner the attention of his readers – **James 4:4-5**
 - a. Adulteresses – spiritual.
 - b. "Do you not know?" – they do, but their knowledge is dormant, thus, inactive and ineffective – You know better than that!
 - c. Enmity/enemy – the implications and consequences of your behavior reach farther than you seem to realize.
4. These strong inspired words of James' pen are sorely needed among God's people today. Are we guilty of what James is reproving his readers for?
 - I. Fundamental Knowledge of God
 - A. God is Holy
 - a. **1 Peter 1:15-16** – He is holy and calls His people to holiness. (Separate from sin)
 - b. **"Do you not know" (James 4:4)** – indicates surprise, i.e. they should know.
 - i. The effect their relationship with the world had on their relationship with God was based in fundamental knowledge of who God is.
 - ii. This is knowledge they possessed, but evidently were not entirely grasping, at least in a practical sense.
 - c. Enmity – *echthra*; hostility; by implication, a reason for opposition. (Strong)
 - i. **"friendship with the world is hostility toward God" (NASB)**
 - ii. In being a friend of the world, YOU SET YOURSELF IN OPPOSITION AGAINST GOD.
 - iii. To the degree that you become His enemy!
 - d. World:
 - i. Creation – globe.
 - ii. People – inhabitants of the creation.
 - iii. Wicked realm of Satan – **John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11** – **"ruler of this world"**
 - iv. Realm of lusts – **1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:2**

- e. Friendship – *philia*; fondness (STRONG); It involves “the idea of loving as well as being loved” (Mayor) (VINE)
 - i. A mutual comfort – you with the world, and the world with you.
 - ii. If God is holy – entirely separate from the sinful world – then making nice with the world sets oneself against God.
 - f. **“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness” (Habakkuk 1:13).**
 - g. Point of God’s holiness made before by James:
 - i. **James 1:13-14** – temptation to evil cannot possibly come from God, but it comes from our own desires.
 - ii. **James 1:16-17** – Only good comes from God.
 - 1. Father of lights – righteousness, goodness, etc.
 - 2. No variation or shadow of turning – i.e. no hint of darkness at all, never a change, ONLY LIGHT.
- B. God is Intolerant of Sin
- a. **1 John 1:5-6** – cannot be in fellowship with God while in darkness – an impossibility
 - b. **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1** – to be with God you must come out, and to refuse is to decidedly set oneself against God.
 - i. He does not and will not tolerate sin in a relationship with Him.
- II. Fundamental Knowledge of Our Relationship with God
- A. God with Israel
- a. **James 4:4** – adulterers and adulteresses.
 - i. Not noting that some of them were guilty of what he indicated was prohibited in – **James 2:11**
 - ii. In their spiritual relationship with God.
 - b. **Matthew 12:39** – Jesus called the Jewish people the same – especially the Pharisees.
 - c. Jehovah was the husband of Israel, His bride:
 - i. **Jeremiah 31:32** – husband of His people (Speaking of the NC in contrast to the OC).
 - ii. As such, demanded fidelity to Him, but they were unfaithful – **Jeremiah 3:6-10, 14**
 - d. Israel put away for her adultery (spiritual) – **Isaiah 50:1**
 - e. Another marriage foretold – **Isaiah 54:5-6** – to the “Redeemer” (Christ)
- B. Christ with His Church
- a. Christ is the Husband of His bride, the church – **John 3:29** (John speaking of Jesus, and he himself decreasing at the coming of Jesus)
 - b. The description of that marriage – **Ephesians 5:23-27, 30-32**
 - i. **(vv. 23-24)** – church to be subject to Christ.
 - ii. **(vv. 25-27)** – church to be separate (sanctified), clean (from sin), holy and without blemish. (Pure before her husband)

- iii. **(vv. 30-32)** – using the marriage figure to describe the relationship between Christ and the church – ONE FLESH – NOT TO BE JOINED TO ANOTHER.
 - 1. **1 Corinthians 6:15-17** – speaking of sexual immorality, but an applicable general idea to our fidelity to Christ overall.
 - c. **James 4:4** – adulterers and adulteresses.
 - i. This puts friendship with the world in a new light.
 - ii. WHEN CHRISTIANS ASSOCIATE WITH WORLDLINESS IN THIS WAY, AND SHOW THEMSELVES FRIENDS, THEY ARE COMMITTING ADULTERY.
 - iii. This is something we can understand, and relate to – DON'T DO THIS TO GOD.
 - d. He is a jealous husband, and rightly so – **James 4:5** – HS (through the word) wants all of our devotion.
 - i. **James 1:21** – implanted word (**Ephesians 6:17** – instrument of the Spirit – sword)
 - ii. **Galatians 5:16-17** – not do what we wish, but what the Spirit instructs.
 - iii. Does not wish to share His bride with another!
- III. Our Relationship to the World
- A. IN the World but Not OF the World
 - a. At our conversion we were conveyed, and delivered:
 - i. **Colossians 1:13** – no longer serve under the authority of Satan, but God. ("**power**" – *exousia* – authority) (**cf. Acts 26:18**)
 - ii. **Romans 6:17** – delivered to the doctrine of Christ – to submit to it as master now.
 - iii. While we live in the same place (earth) where all this unrighteousness is, we are not serving the same things as everyone else.
 - b. Jesus' prayer on behalf of apostles – **John 17:14-19**
 - i. **(v. 14)** – animosity from the world because not associated.
 - ii. **(vv. 15-16)** – not to be removed from world but GUARDED AGAINST SERVING SATAN LIKE THE WORLD DOES – not under the same rule.
 - iii. **(vv. 17-19)** – set apart from the world by the truth of God – truth that rules in the heart – **cf. John 8:31-32** – abide in word.
 - iv. **I.e. we are among those who are walking according to the rule of Satan, but we are under the rule of Christ.**
 - B. Enemies of the World
 - a. **John 17:14** – the world hates those who are truly set apart.
 - i. **John 15:18-19** – as Jesus mentioned earlier – we are not loved because we don't belong to the world.
 - b. **James 4:4** – if friendship with the world aligns us against God, then being aligned with God aligns us against the world.

- c. NOTE: Remember, the world we are enemies with is not the people, but the way of life they're submitting to.
 - i. Our quarrel is with sin, and the ruler of sin himself.
 - ii. **Ephesians 6:12** – we are at war with Satan and his spiritual hosts of wickedness.
- d. Combatting darkness with light, not making nice with it – **Ephesians 5:8-13** – totally opposed, and actively militant against it. (The exact opposite of friendship)

Conclusion

1. We must understand our relationship to the world in order to maintain our relationship with God.
2. We have no right as the bride of Christ to be associated in any way with the world.
3. We should be aligned against the world of sin like God is.