

Title: Struggle For Control

Text: James 4:1-10

Let us turn to James chapter 4. James chapter 4 beginning with Vs 1. There are notes in your bulletin. They are there for you to use as we study the Word of God together. James chapter 4 beginning with Vs 1.....Our Topic: STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL...

(James 4:1-10)

PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we pray that in these few moments you would plant the Word of God deeply within our hearts. Help us to find deliverance from the struggles that go on in our lives. God how we need your control. Help us see that we hold within our hands the possibility of control. The control that comes from the Holy Spirit who lives within us. Our Father, we pray, that we might make that decision today to surrender to you. So, that, we may have victory over the struggles that go on within the human heart. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.....

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Everyone of us is aware that there is a struggle within us. Maybe not to the extent of the harshness of murder. But, there is a struggle that goes on within us because we desire to run our own lives. We want to form and mold our plans for the future. We want to be behind everything we do. It is our life.... It is our ball game....I am the pitcher...And we want to run things our way.

And to say that God wants to run our lives. And that God wants to control our lives. And to say that God must control our lives, if we are to have the peace and happiness that we desire, just seems to turn us off. And we rebel and say, "HAY! I can find peace..I can find happiness...I can find satisfaction without the help of God."

But, dear friends, God's Word remains us that there is a constant struggle going on within us for the control of our lives.

Paul said it best..."The things I know I should do...I don't do them.

"And the things I know I shouldn't do, I do them.

And the Bible describes this struggle in the heart of a Christian as "SELF VERSES THE SPIRIT." Or, "the old sin nature verses our new nature in Christ."

It maybe that you are not a Christian. Perhaps you are doing the best you can in trying to be "CHRIST LIKE" in your actions. But, you have never come to know a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And there is a great struggle that goes on. A struggle between God and Satan going on over your life. A struggle between yourself and what you know God really wants in your life. The struggle for control.

Now, I would like to share just two things from this passage about this struggle. I would like you to see THE CAUSE BEHIND THIS STRUGGLE. Why do we have this problem? Why is it there? Then, in the second place, I would like you to see THE CURE FOR THIS STRUGGLE.

(1C) So, first of all, the CAUSE FOR THIS STRUGGLE. *Why is it there?*

In verses 1 thru 4, James gives us two things that cause this struggle. (1D) He says in Vs 1, that the struggle is caused because of the war that goes on in your life. ~~The war that goes on in your life.~~ James makes it very clear that the problem, the struggle, the pressure, the frustration, and the tensions is the result of a war that is going on in your life. ~~That is in us personally.~~ There is a great conflict and battle going on.

James reminds us in these verses that the human heart is restless. And it can never be satisfied because of this <sup>war</sup> way.

You will notice in Vs 2 that he says ..YOU DO NOT HAVE." He, also, says, "YOU CANNOT OBTAIN." In Vs 3 he says, "YOU DO NOT RECEIVE." and "YOU DO NOT HAVE."

Four times James emphasis that the natural heart or our old sin nature is never satisfied. It doesn't receive that which it longs for. And it constantly struggles to get it.

Today, people are seeking every pleasure to bring happiness. Most people work and survive until the weekend. If I can just last the week. Friday night will be here then I will be able to live it up. Others are drinking themselves to death in what they call the social drink at the social hour. The bars of this fine city of ours draws more people than the churches on Sunday morning. And people seek relief from the struggles of life by drinking themselves in the bottle.

Many people seek the business of activities. To be busy doing things. This will bring happiness. Some <sup>people</sup> of us have a hard time setting at home for two hours without wondering what to do. So busy....doing everything, -going everywhere.. and the struggle goes on in our hearts. And we can not find peace because a war is there in our lives.

The Bible tells us there are two reasons for this war. Remember, James is talking about Christians. This is a message for Christians. What is the reason for this war? James says, there are two reasons why this war is going on in our hearts. Two reasons.

(1E) THE FIRST REASON is found in Vs 2. He says "we have not, and so we fight and quarrel and we are envious because we do not ask." And James is saying that this is the number one reason for the lack of real satisfaction in the human heart. And that is: we never bring to God the needs we have. We go everywhere else. But, the truth of this passage is that real satisfaction to the struggles of our heart is to go to God. YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT. Praylessness will cause many sins in the life of a Christian.

Someone has said that PRAYLESSNESS is the grand daddy of all sins. We refuse to pray. And thus, we open ourselves to the conflict and the battle goes on. We refuse to turn it over to God and seek His help and we try to operate our lives without Him. Dear friends, it cannot be done. Prayer is the strength of the soul. Prayer is communication with God.

*I have heard people say -  
→ I have prayed - But that  
hasn't worked - We need to do something  
else*

Prayer means that I fellowship with God. Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing." This doesn't mean that we shall be in a public prayer meeting all day. It doesn't mean that we should get on our knees. Even though I think that is a wonderful position to be in. What does it mean to pray without ceasing? It means that you are aware of God's presences in all that you are doing throughout the day. It is fellowshiping with God in all that you are doing.

And my friends, fellowship with God in prayer is essential in the life of a believer. It is essential if we want to get rid of the conflict and the war that goes on inside of us. "YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT."

(2E) But, then James goes on to give us a second reason for this war that is within us. And basically it is selfishness. Vs 3.. "You ask (that is--those who do ask) and you do not receive." WHY? "because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Now, that seems pretty clear. <sup>The Reason</sup> We have struggles in our lives <sup>and a war is going on</sup> is because of prayerlessness. We never ask God to help us. And then those of us who do ask God for help, ask <sup>for the wrong reason</sup> so that we may spend it on our pleasures. In other words, folks who do this are trying to get something from God to satisfy the pleasure seeking heart. And that, dear friends, is pure selfishness. WOW!!

Do you remember the Parable of the sower who goes out to sow seeds in Luke chapter 8? Jesus is telling the parable of the sower who drops seeds on four kinds of soil. *Some seeds* It dropped on the roadside - and because it had no depth to it, the birds came and devoured all the seeds. Other seeds fell on ~~rocky~~ rocky soil. The seed took root and started to grow; but there wasn't enough moisture in the soil because of the rocks and the plants died.

And Jesus said these are the kind of people who received the Word of God with joy, but that joy doesn't last when they are offended or persecuted because it wasn't real *salvation*

And the ~~third~~ *third* kind of soil is ground that is full of thorns. The seed grows, but the thorns choked the plants and they die. And Jesus explains that the thorns are the riches, cares, and pleasures of this life. *materialism*

*Then, some seed fell on good soil - and the plants grow and prosper*  
 You see, only one kind of ground produces fruit. It is the good soil.

Now, tie that in with what James is saying. He tells us that there is a war ~~going~~ *going* on in each of us caused by PRAYLESSNESS because we don't ask God to meet our needs. And when we do ask God, we ask with the wrong motive because we want to spend it on our own *self* pleasures. And James says our conflict comes from our wrong motives. We desire to have what we want to have instead of what God wants us to have. WE BECOME *self* PLEASURE SEEKERS. And the Bible says it is the cause of the *war* conflict within us. OH, FRIENDS, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

(30) But, there is a second cause for this struggle *within* us. Vs 4 says, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

James said that the conflict and struggle within us is the result of WORLDLINESS IN OUR LIVES..WORLDLINESS....Not only the war within, but also the war without with what we see. He tells us that it is worldliness. And to be a friend of the world makes us an enemy of God. So many Christians are trying to live on the middle of the fence with one foot in the world and one foot in God's camp. Oh, friends, this is impossible. You cannot serve God and Manna.....

What is worldliness? Worldliness is not referring to mankind. The Bible says that "God so loved mankind."

Now, most of you ladies have used this word "WORLD" this morning. That is right... The word used in the original Greek language is the word *translated* "COSMETICS".

Now, I am not saying that "cosmetics" make you worldly. If I did, I would be in big trouble, today. In fact, I would not be invited home for dinner.

But, the word "worldliness" comes from the word that gives us the word "COSMETICS." It is the Greek word "COSMOS". And it means, "the orderly arrangement of things. The universe, the cosmos, is in an orderly arranged state. And from this we get our word "COSMETICS."

So, when ladies use cosmetics they are basically arranging themselves in an orderly fashion. IS IT WRONG TO USE COSMETICS?.....No way....As I have often said, if the barn door needs *pantry* arranging, you ought to *pantry* arrange it.....(HA)

But, seriously, the term worldliness means the average philosophy of the average *unbeliever* person of the street which all of us breathe in and breathe out every day we live. It is the idea of "getting all you can and can all you get" view point of our day. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.... attitude. It is the atmosphere of our world of which we all live. [And God says that if you make friends with this worldly philosophy, if you operate your life according to the philosophies of the unbelieving *person* world, and you are seeking first the world instead of God, "then you are an enemy of God!"

There are people who are spending all their time trying to get "things" to satisfy themselves. They buy "things" because they believe that "things" will bring them happiness. And homes and personal lives fall apart....and there is only hatred and struggles going on....WHY?....Because people are seeking the pleasures of the things of this world. WORLDLINESS CAUSES THE STRUGGLES..... *and we Christians get caught up in this philosophy. Then, we wonder why we never experience God's peace.*

(2 C) O.K...HOW DO I SOLVE THIS PROBLEM? I am trying to run my own life. How do I get out of it? How do I let God have control?

Well, *raise* ~~praise~~ the Lord. God gives us the answer. He tells us to do three things.....

(1) Number one, according to Verses 5 and 6, we need an awareness of what God the Holy Spirit wants to do.

You know what the problem is? Most of us are not aware of what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our life. Vs 5 says... "do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us." That verse is saying that the Holy Spirit has one desire. WHICH IS TO CONTROL *our lives*

Then Vs 6 says "but he gives a greater grace." WHO?...The Holy Spirit.... Now, why do we need grace? Grace is everything that God gives to us that we do not deserve. All of God's power and all of his strength in us...All of God's blessings....all of God's provisions.....Everything that we do not deserve....God gives all this to us....HIS GRACE....Everything we need to live the abundant christian life. *To Be happy in This Life, God gives To U*

The problem is that most of us do not believe it. And that is why we have a hard time over coming the struggles. That is why we have a hard time finding delieverance from the domination of the world in our lives.

And the Bible is telling us that the Holy Spirit wants to free us...He wants to give us more grace. That is why he says in Vs 6 that God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. To the person who says, "I need *The Lord* God in my life. I need *Jesus* God to save me. I cannot meet the needs of my own heart; but I know *Jesus* God can; and I turn my life over to the complete control of *my Father Jesus, J.C.* the Lord."

And friends, *Then* God will work in that heart. Because he gives grace to the humble. So, we need and awareness of what the Holy Spirit want, to do...

(2) Secondly, in verses 7-10, we have a need of action that requires an immidiate decision. Look at the words in these verses which should help

you to understand.....*Action Words* VS 7..."Submit to God....Resist the devil"....

Vs 8..."Draw near to God...Cleanse *your hands*...Purify your hearts"....

Vs 9..."Mourn and weep'.....Vs 10..."Humble yourselves".....

*Let's Laugh - Joy -*

In these verses you find <sup>8</sup>10 solid imperatives. And imperative is a word which requires immediate action. In other words, James is saying that these are things we ought to be doing, right now...

And I say to you this morning..that one reason why we never get the victor ~~for~~ over ourselves, and one reason why we never see God work in us... is because we never make this immediate decision. We never decide for God because we are afraid of what others may think...or...whatever the reason. And yet, dear friends, the Word of God says to do it NOW. It demands immediate action and God is waiting for us. He wants to change our life, if we would only give Him the chance and say: NOW LORD JESUS...NOW!

Let me ask you a question: HOW DOES A PERSON RECEIVE JESUS AS SAVIOUR?  
ANSWER: By an immediate action of faith... *a decision of heart!*

You see, you do not grow-up into Christ. The Bible teaches that the moment a person believes in Christ he is saved. The moment we trust Christ for what He has done for us when he died on the cross for our sins....WE ARE SAVED. *an immediate action of faith on our part*

And dear friends, the same thing is true about the struggles in our lives. The same kind of decision is needed. Romans 12:1 says to present yourself to God....YOU SEE!!!....Do it now...Make the decision to build your life on Jesus Christ *and His Word - NOT on the philosophies of the world*

(3C) Then finally, notice the victory of assurance that God gives to us.  
Vs 7 says..."if we resist the devil he will flee from us." In Vs 8, God says that He will draw near to us. And in Vs 10 "if we humble ourselves He will exalt us."

Praise God!...The Victory of Assurance....Those who have accepted Jesus are free from self....free from satan....free from the control of the world. We have the assurance of fellowship with God..

I wonder who is going to win the battle in your life, in my life? Is God going to have control? You know, God wants to have control. But we need to submit ourselves unto Him.



Maybe you are here today and you say, "Well, Pastor, I am not a christian." And you say, "I have tried to win the battles that go on in my life. And I want to know Jesus."

Well, dear friends, Jesus said that if you believe in Him, He would save you. Jesus said: "Come unto me and I will give you rest." Jesus said that if we would confess Him before men, He will confess us before the Father in Heaven.

And the question is: Will you do that? Will you, right now, confess your sin and ask Jesus to forgive you and to ~~come~~ come into your life?....

And dear christian friends, victory is yours today by yeilding to the Holy Spirits control. OH, how we need to stop grieving the Holy Spirit by whom we were sealed for the day of redemption. And you know whether or not you are living far away from the foot of the crosss. You know whether or not the Holy Spirit has first place in your life. Oh, dear friends, ~~during this christmas season~~ let's draw near to God and He will draw near to us.....

Shall We close in prayer -