

Wednesdays in the Word  
Digging Deeper  
August 12, 2020  
James 4:1-6  
Worldly Christians

This week's scripture finds us in the grips of a dilemma. We are being scolded by our author for rebellious behavior. Next week we will find instructions to bring success to our worldly battles. Verses 1-5 reads like the list of the worst of society's ills. Wars, fightings, lust, killing and desire. We read of dissatisfaction, selfishness and dashed hopes. Adultery, worldliness, envy and pride. Add to that, Enmity With God! My goodness! That can't be us! We're Christians! That's talking about all those evil unsaved, lost masses out there right? Well, yes but it hits us as well. You all know that Jesus told us that if we've thought it, we've done it. Matthew 5:21-22. Ouch! 27-28. Oof! Keep reading from there if you dare. Sin is more settled in our souls than we know. All this horrible activity, sadly, fills our streets these days and if we apply the misery described here, we can quickly recognize why the wicked heart of man is so frustrated, angry and hateful. James' admonition though is directed at us. He echoes the reprimand of 3:8-10.

Let's dig in just a bit to verse 4. By using the word 'ye' he is addressing the churches of the scattered tribes of Israel. Hebrew Christians. Aka all Christians. Us! Adulterers? Yup. We cheat on our Lord Jesus when we get cozy with the world. Enmity is the Greek word "echthra". It means hostility or opposition. Worldliness in us is hostile and opposed to God. The word 'enemy' is a variant of the same word. It is 'echthros'. Thayer's lexicon describes this as opposing God in the mind. It seems we hold a very poor position when these symptoms describe us. The world, cosmos in the Greek, is printed here as copied from among the expanded definitions.

[The ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ. World 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.]

Putting all this together we can understand that though we belong to heaven and operate in the world there must remain a disconnect of sorts. Consider these. 1 John 2:15-17, John 17:15-20. When our hearts and deepest concerns are focused on the world's pleasures or problems, we take our eyes off Christ. We can be preoccupied with so many things that are important but none the less deadly to our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Politics, careers, money, friends, possessions and on and on. All can get in between our devotion to the Savior.

Today's passage ends on a high note. Verse 6 tells us that the true and powerful opposition is from God Himself against all who, in their own pride, turn away from Him and reject Him. Hopefully we can find ourselves in that last word. Humble. 'Tapeinos' is Greek for someone 'of low degree'. We must be honest about how we see ourselves as we stand before the Throne. Acknowledging our Heavenly Father in proper contrast to us puts us in a position to receive His grace. Instructions to guide us will be covered next week. Meanwhile consider these. Roman's 12:2. Colossians 3:2. John 15:19. Titus 2:12. Stay closer to the Lord every moment.