

Sermon or Lesson: James 4:4 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Our Worldliness Is Hostility Towards God

INTRO: Have you ever been betrayed by someone you had a history of being a very close friend with? Worse yet, that person then continued to smooth talk with you while simultaneously talking trash about you to others. How did that affect your relationship with that person? Would you ever behave toward and treat this way someone you care about very much?

Now before you go saying to yourself, "No! I would never do anything like that.", consider that you are perpetrating this same kind of damage and harm to your relationship with God when you engage in worldliness. Yup! That's how God sees it.

READ: James 4:4, with verses 3:14-16, 4:1-3 for context

Q: In this section of verses, what are some examples of believers engaging in worldliness?

- - Those believers among us who harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition; (v.3:14)
 - - those who pervert the use of God-given wisdom; (v.3:15)
 - - those who foment disorder and evil practice; (v.3:16)
 - - those who engage in fights and quarrels among us; (v.4:1)
 - - those who pursue sinful sensual desires; (v.4:1)
 - - those who destroy and covet; (v.4:2)
 - - those who do these things among other believers; (vv.3:13; 4:1)
 - - those who hold impure motives; (v.4:3)
 - - those who engage in worldly activities; (v.4:4)
 - - they are all guilty before God. (v.4:4)
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[Lesson Question: Exactly what are we guilty of if we believers embrace worldliness?]

SECTION POINT: We believers who embrace worldliness are guilty before God:

- - Guilty of this sinfulness. (vv.3:15-16)
- - Guilty of thwarting the activities of God - READ vv.3:17-18.
- - Guilty of perverting (v.3:16) the activities of God (vv.3:17-18), for example trying to use God-given wisdom to pursue one's agenda of envy and selfish ambition.

v.4:4 - READ

- - Guilty of betrayal by siding with the thinking, beliefs, behaviors of worldliness, which is an enemy of God (vv.3:15; 4:4). This "friendship with the world" can involve apathetic response to, or agreeing with, or believing, or succumbing to, or participating in, or promoting of worldliness.

- - Guilty of spiritual moral adultery, breaking faithfulness to God. (v.4:4)
- - Guilty of participating in things that seriously damage one's relationship with God. (v.4:4)

- - Guilty of perpetrating "hostility" towards God. (v.4:4 "hatred" = Strong's #2189)
 "hostility" = *AHD* - "1. Of, relating to, or characteristic of an enemy: hostile forces; hostile acts. 2. Feeling or showing enmity or ill will; antagonistic: a hostile remark. 3. Unfavorable to health or well-being. Inhospitable or adverse; defiant, incontinent, insubordinate; opposed; unfriendly; conflictive".

- - Guilty of rebellion against God, actively "opposing" Him, blatantly rejecting His will. (v.4:4 "hatred" = Strong's #2189)

- - Guilty of being a traitor, willingly "choosing" to work for an enemy of God. (v.4:4)

- - Guilty of being a defector, willingly choosing to change membership to the enemy of God. (v.4:4)

- - Guilty of "being shown" to have "become an enemy of God" (Strong's #2525; v.4:4 *NIV*). The evidence of one's actions is proof of one's guilt, proof of one's new allegiance, and proof of one's new membership.

- - People who are true believers should be able to see these principles, to distinguish and know that when they have any friendship with the ways of the world, they are committing spiritual adultery against God.

- - Devout and mature believers should be keenly aware, sensitive to, and diligent to guard against succumbing to these violations.

[Lesson Question: How and why is being "a friend of the world" a "choice"? (v.4)]

SECTION POINT: Being "a friend of the world" is a "choice" we individually make by our own determination.

- - We choose to formulate our own moral code, usually solidifying it in our early teenage years.

- - By the time just before our teen years, we have gained a basic understanding of our parents' moral code and of the world's moral code. Up until then, we are observing and learning about moral codes while we are compelled to comply to our parents' moral code.

- - But starting in our early teen years, we choose to morally align with what suits us, what we want, the way we see life, the aspects of how we want to be. This is the formation of our personal moral value system.

- - Within this freedom and ability to formulate our own personal moral value system, we have the choice of embracing the world's value system or we can embrace God's value system.

- - Failure to embrace God's value system in totality is unacceptable, disloyal, and offensive to God. And trying to embrace both the world's value system and God's value system is regarded by God as being adulterous. From the sharpness of the wording being used here, God takes this very seriously.

BIG IDEA: God seriously regards our engaging in worldliness as committing moral adultery against Him, exhibiting hostility against Him, and becoming adversarial against Him.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you now appreciate how seriously and how offensively and how personally God takes your worldliness?
 - - Do you really want to so profoundly damage your relationship with God by engaging in worldliness?
 - - How can you expect God to bless you if He is regarding you as His hostile enemy because of your worldliness?

 - - We are to be holy as He is holy; we are to be in the world but not of the world (see 1 Peter 1:14-17). You cannot be a friend of God if you are a friend of the world.
 - - Why not do some major spiritual and moral housecleaning today, right now? Identify and cast out of your life every bit of worldliness you can find - and then keep looking for more to get rid of, to get out of your life, and then keep it out.
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File name: James4_4-SermonOrLesson.____ (.htm, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

Source: www.BelieverAssist.com

Updated: May 13, 2016