

Sermon or Lesson: James 4:5-6 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Your Worldliness Provokes God

INTRO: Do you ever experience when someone you have a very close relationship with, whom you have invested a lot into, and who is suppose to be on your side, takes a deliberate step away from you that also is destructive to your relationship with that person? And when you go and try to reason with the person, he/she essentially ignores what you said and continues taking steps that are destructive to your relationship. What kind of response does this person's actions provoke in you?

Let's look at how God is provoked to respond when we believers engage in sinful worldliness.

READ: James 4:5-6

v.5 - READ

[Lesson Question: Exactly what are we believers to know about what Scripture says regarding when we embrace worldliness?]

SECTION POINT: God intensely yearns for our affection and devotion.

- - We who are believers should know what Scriptures say. ("*Or do you think Scripture says*")
- - We who are believers should also know that there is always "purpose" behind what Scriptures say. ("*without reason*") (Strong's #2761)

- - A main principle in Scriptures is: God "yearns" for us. (Strong's #1971 - "*intensely*")
- - He intensely craves our love, our attention, our faithfulness, our affection, our devotion, our admiration, our reverence, our appreciation, our respect, our awe.
- - He so intensely craves our affection and devotion that He sends His Spirit "to live in" (v.5) each believer, to become one with each of us spiritually. (see 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and 1 Corinthians 6:17, with 13b-16)
- - God considers this spiritual oneness between His Spirit and our spirit to be essentially a spiritual marriage. As Hosea 2:19-20 says, ""19. I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. 20. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD.""
- - Therefore a purpose for His Spirit to live within us is to facilitate the utmost of spiritually intimate contact, connection, and experience between His Spirit and our spirit.
- - But we defile the purity, violate the oneness, and disrupt the amicable functioning of this inner spiritual interaction when we divert our affection and devotion away from Him and onto worldliness.
- - So we provoke His love to become "envious" and jealous for our affection and devotion, which we have given instead to our illicit lover known as worldliness.
- - By implication, because He is the only true God, He alone deserves our complete and continuous affection and devotion.

- - By implication, the inhabiting of His Spirit in our life denotes a sense of personal ownership, claim, and investment by God in us.
 - - If we divert our affection and devotion to the ways of the world, then this is idolatry - the worshipping of a false god.
 - Therefore, friendship with the world is:
 - - - - a serious adversarial action; ("hatred towards God", "*becomes an enemy*" v.4)
 - - - - a serious action of rejection;
 - - - - a serious action of betrayal - "disloyal; giving aid to the enemy"; (*AHD* - 'betrayal')
 - - - - a monumental "adulterous" act of unfaithfulness to God; (v.4)
 - - - - a sacrilegious trashing of amicable spiritual intimacy with God; ("*friendship*" v.4)
 - - - - a huge insult to God, His character, and His actions towards us - His goodness, love, forgiveness, holiness, provision for salvation, working for sanctification, and etc.;
 - - - - and an idolatrous abomination to God. ("*becomes an enemy of God*" v.4)
 - - And the committing of idolatry is worthy of death - in the Old Testament. (Deuteronomy 17:2-7)
 - - Doubly so, adultery is likewise deserving of immediate execution. (Leviticus 20:10)
 - - Consequently, when we believers choose to engage in worldliness, we deserve to be gruesomely executed twice!! - And perhaps even on the same day.
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v.6 - READ

[Lesson Question: What are God's response and the ramifications to our engaging in worldliness?]

SECTION POINT: Our worldliness incites God to respond by giving us more grace.

- - "But" - a contrary connecting word; God has a contrary response to our spiritual moral adulterous actions.
- - Even though our "friendship with the world" makes us "an enemy of God" (v.4), provokes Him to "envy intensely" (v.5), and qualifies us to be treated as His "enemy" (v.4), God responds in a contrary way of extending "more grace" to us (v.6).
- - He extends to us continued and more undeserved favor even though we continue to adulterate ourselves from Him with worldliness (v.4), and even though we rebel against Him (vv.4,7), and even though we follow the devil's moral system (vv.3:15,16; 4:7), and even though we wander from Him (vv.4,5,8), and even though we defile ourselves (vv.3:15; 4:4,6,8), and even though we corrupt ourselves (vv.3:16; 4:4,8).
- - Giving us more undeserved favor rather than the immediate serious punishment we deserve is different from how He responded in the Old Testament times, as warned in Deuteronomy 4:23-27 for example.
- - Numerous passages in the Old Testament describe and warn about God's jealousy when His believing children turn aside to follow the evil of the world.
- - In this passage in James, by twice referring to what the "Scripture says" (v.5,6), emphasis is being place on its authority - the authority the Scriptures should have in the believer's life and the authority the Scriptures possesses because it contains descriptions and instructions from God specifically for us believers.

-- The Scripture, Proverbs 3:34, is referred to in authoritative explanatory support of the assertion "but He gives us more grace".

-- This explanatory support is that God "opposes" or "sets Himself against" those who are proud and conversely gives "gracious love" to those who are humble. (Strong's #0498; #5485)

-- i.e. God actively works against the proud while He actively works for the humble. Either way, God is actively working upon both of these types of people. (cf. Psalms 31:23)

-- By implication from this section in James 3:13-4:6, all of these sinful characteristics - the bitter envy, selfish ambition, fights, quarrels, becoming friends with the world - they all have a common foundation they each rest upon - pride - which essentially is trying to make oneself into a god:

----- self-determining,

----- self-governed,

----- self-sufficient,

----- self-serving,

----- self-independent,

----- self-exalting,

----- self-appointed divine absolute ruler over our respective corner of the world. (cf. Proverbs 13:10)

-- The thinking philosophy of "I am god of my corner of the world" permeates all of the thinking of the world's philosophy. (implied in v.4)

-- Thereby, the only true God resolutely stands against everyone who tries to make himself/herself into a god, which is a main element of pride and of the world's philosophy.

-- Meanwhile, undeserved loving favor remains at the ready, being given to those who rightly acknowledge their proper position in the order of God's creation - a finite created being that is not a god nor approved to try to be a god.

BIG IDEA: Your worldliness provokes God to intensely desire that His relationship with you be uncorrupted, two-way, amicable, and intimate, but consequently He extends you more grace rather than the deserved punishment.

APPLICATIONS:

-- Do you, as a believer, take seriously your obligation to pay attention to what the Scriptures say and to interpret it properly?

-- Do you take seriously your obligation to give Scriptures the authority it deserves in your life?

-- Do you flaunt God's extending to you more grace while you engage in more worldliness? (cf. Romans 6:1-2)

-- Do you not hunger for a healthy, intimate relationship with God?

- - Do you now see and more fully appreciate the damage your worldliness does daily to your relationship with God?
 - - Do you now see and more fully appreciate the magnitude and the depth of God's love and His gracious extending to you more undeserved favor?

 - - Why not give up all worldliness - right here, right now?
 - - Why not humble yourself and make God the only god of your entire life, solely and comprehensively in every area?
 - - Why not henceforth let God set the guidelines for what and how you think, believe, behave, and live?
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