

Lesson 8 The World Verses God: Our Place Before Him

James 4:1-2 “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? **v2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.”

Romans 7:14-25 “We know that the *law is spiritual*; but I am *unspiritual*, sold as a slave to sin.

V15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. **V16**

And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. **V17** As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. **V18** For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. *For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.*

V19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

V20 Now if I do what I do not want to do it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. **V21** So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

V22 For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; **v23** but I see another law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. **V24** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? **V25** Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

The *law is spiritual* because it originates (comes from) *God and reflects His holy character.*

Unspiritual is not someone who is unsaved, but someone who is saved and still battles the flesh—a condition that will persist until the Savior returns. Born with Adam’s legacy believers have the capacity to sin. They are gifted with a new capacity from God; the ability to do right. These two capacities are at war (conflict) within the believer. The conflict with evil is within the believer herself or himself and not a conflict with evil in the world.

Galatians 5:15 “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.”

Matthew 7:9-11 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **V10** Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? **V11** If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” Jesus commands His followers to pray in three ways: **Ask, seek, and knock.**

This is present tense to continuously keep on doing this in order to receive a response from God.

Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people because all sinned.”

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” Wickedness of the human heart is beyond cure. Being in the flesh is an absolute inability to please God. *Only surrender to the Spirit can guarantee motives that will be pleasing to God.*

James 1:17 “*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights*, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

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The kingdoms of God and the world are opposing kingdoms.

1)Unchecked fleshly desires lead to conflict within the church and in our relationships.

Q: What causes people to fight and sin against each other? James 4:1-2, Galatians 5:13-16

Godly wisdom leads to a community or relationship that lifts one another up rather than tearing down one another. Fights and sin against one another is our sinful desire to get what we _____. **(James 4:1-2).** We seek as much pleasure, wealth, status and stuff for ourselves as possible, even if it means hurting other people. It's pursuing our fleshly _____ instead of Christ, fighting, stealing and even murder to get something we don't have. **(v2)** Sins come back to the root of *fleshly desire—trying to get what we want.*

Romans 7:14-25 Paul tells us this is a battle of spiritual warfare between the good our minds and hearts _____ to do and *the evil of our flesh desires*. We steal, lie, cheat and do whatever it takes even to people we love. Including our brother's and sister's in Christ. We must choose daily to walk in the _____ **(Galatians 5:15)** The Spirit works in us, changes us, grows His fruit in us, but we *can't sit idly by*, we have a part to play; choosing to **walk** daily by the Spirit, not just walking in God's ways! The word "walk" means a daily habitual lifestyle. Not just Sunday mornings!

2) God gives us what we need. Q: Why do we sometimes not receive what we ask God for?

Q: What kinds of gifts does God give to His children? Who defines what is "good"?

James 4:2 "You do not have because you do not ask." **V1:5** "If any of you lack wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault," Godly wisdom is always good for us, never a bad thing! So, God will give us wisdom when we ask and/or a situation that makes godly wisdom grow in us. This applies to the Fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit are _____ things for us to have; they are never bad for us! If we ask God for patience, He will give us patience and/or circumstances that grow patience in us. If we ask for faith, He will give us peace and/or circumstances that grow faith in us. God delights in giving _____ things to us.

Matthew 7:9-11

Sometimes God says no to our request. We are born into a ____ nature inherited from Adam and Eve **(Romans 5:12)** Our hearts are desperately _____ **(Jeremiah 17:9).** That means we ask out of our sinful nature, the fleshly desires, and not asking for godly things (Fruit of the Spirit). Paul writes about this in **Galatians 5.** God only gives us _____ things---every good gift is from Him **(James 1:17).** He delights in giving us good gifts, but He will not give us evil things. If God says NO it's a fleshly passion, but sometimes it's just not the right timing. *His answers are either yes, no, or not yet!* We may believe it is a good thing because we misunderstand, we're being manipulated or deceived, or we don't see the full picture as God does. Satan is good at that!

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3) Friendship with the world is enmity with God. Q: Why does James, John and Paul describe such a sharp division between God's kingdom and the world?

James made a sharp divide between the things of this world and the things of God. (v4:4-5) Paul did the same in (Galatians 5:16-24) using the same language—fleshly passions and _____. John likewise urges Christians not to love the things of this world. But that doesn't mean we are not to love the _____ things of this world such as sunsets and coffee. God created the world good, He loves it and all the people in it. What the apostles referred to was the sinful fleshly desires. And the evil forces of _____ (Ephesians 6:10). The "domain of _____" (Colossians 1:13). God is ever faithful in His promises but Israel and we often turn to other "gods". *This is cheating on God.* Other gods are _____ (Deuteronomy 32:17). Thus, we are "adulterous people," unfaithful to other gods.

God is _____ than Satan (1 John 4:4) *The prince of the world is a fallen angel, not a god.* God told His people "Choose this day whom you will serve," Yahweh or false gods of the nations. (Joshua 24:15). **We also must choose; a covenant relationship with God or show by our actions we are really putting our trust in things of the world.**

4) In all things we must remember that God is God, and we are not.

James 4:6-10, Proverbs 3:31-35 The humble submit to God as Lord of their life.

Q: Why is humility necessary for understanding grace? Why does God oppose the proud?

James told the people what kind of heart attitude—humility it takes to join God's side. Because understanding and accepting the Gospel takes a right understanding and acknowledgement of our proper place before God, which is submission to Him as Lord. (6; Proverbs 3:34) He isn't talking about people who are proud of their own accomplishments or have a high sense of self-confidence. But the kind of pride that exalts self above God, that puts self on the throne of your own life instead of submitting to God as King. Someone who gives himself or herself glory above and beyond what he or she truly deserve. Putting themselves on a higher level than they should

Even if we *don't do it with our words*, we can do it *with our actions* without even realizing it. We do what we want; we don't submit to His authority in the way we live. We spend our lives *building our own little kingdoms rather than serving His.* This is what James and Proverbs mean when they distinguish between the _____ and the proud. The proud live as kings of their lives.

God gives grace to the humble because it is the humble who understand their need for grace.

The general worldview of our culture is that people are inherently good and that you're a generally "good" person if your good deeds outweigh your bad. **This is a distortion of Christianity.** Those who understand the Gospel understand we are all sinners in need of God's grace. They rightly see their position in relation to God. They confess He is God and they are not.

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James 4:4-5 "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. **V5** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?"

James rebukes those who have let their love for the world replace their love for Christ. Their unfaithful behavior has placed their relationship with God in jeopardy, calling them adulterous people. Friendship with the world destroys your fellowship with God.

Galatians 5:16-24 "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **V17** For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit; and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. **V18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **V19** the acts of the flesh are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **v20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, **v21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. **V22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness faithfulness, **v23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **V24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

Ephesians 6:10 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Spiritual warfare require spiritual weapons and God has given Christians everything they need to remain strong in Him. We live in a spiritual war zone where the enemy Satan uses many tactics in his attempts to defeat us as believers; he leads the world astray, he's a murder, a liar, the tempter, & accuser.

Colossians 1:13 "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves," A new kingdom of light, of love, and of liberty from sin and death.

Deuteronomy 32:17 "They sacrificed to false gods, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your ancestors did not fear" The powers behind false gods may be demonic. To open the door other than to the one true God may be demonic activity

1John 4:4 "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Regardless of the opposition--false teachers, worldly pressures, skeptics—believers can live confidently of their status and victory in Christ.

James 4:6-7 "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. **V7** Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, he will flee

Proverbs 3:31-34 " Do not envy the violent or choose any of their ways. **V32** For the LORD detests the perverse but takes the upright into his confidence. **V33** The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. **V 34** He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed."

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James 4:7-11 "Submit yourself, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will glee from you. **v8** Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **V9** Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. **V10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. **V11** Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. "

Psalms 24:3-4 "Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? **V4** The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god."

Psalms 51 A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged her husband's death.

Ezekiel 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." *God's ideal for his people would be realized. He would be their God and they would be His people.*

Matthew 7:15-20 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. **V16** by their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? **V17** Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. **V18** A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. **v19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **V20** Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them." *Believers glorify God and identify themselves with Him by producing spiritual fruit, which includes good works and steadfast character. Where there is no spiritual fruit, there is no spiritual life (faith).*

Matthew 18:15-20 Conflict Resolution God's Way DJB1313

Matthew 7:1-5 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. **V2** For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. **v3** Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? **V4** How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? **V5** *You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*" Jesus is not forbidding spiritual discernment. He condemns judgment coming from a hypocritical and unkind spirit.

Ephesians 4:15 "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the nature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ." *Speaking truth in love encourages spiritual growth and focus on Christ's example of speaking boldly but full of grace and truth.*

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2) Do not slander or condemn one another. James 4:7-11 and Matthew 7:1-5

In **v9** we are told to turn laughter to mourning and joy to gloom. Aren't we to have joy in the Lord? James is talking about *mourning our sin*. To "be wretched" means to be *grieved*. The *proud "laugh" at sin*. They don't take it seriously. The humble are _____ by their sin; wrecked by it; brought to their knees. When we are brought to our knees, then, we can be lifted up **v10**. **Psalms 24:3-4** tells us only those with _____ hands and a pure heart can stand in the presence of God. *That is none of us*. How do we do that? Humble ourselves before God, confess our sins and ask for His grace. He cleanses our _____ and puts a new heart in us. (**Psalms 51, Ezekiel 36:26**) This is how we can draw near to God, be in His presence and walk by His Spirit **v8**. When we move away from the temptations of the Devil, we draw _____ to God **v7**. A pure heart isn't about *doing everything right*, it's a heart fully committed to God, undivided with the world. **Only God has the authority to sit as judge over humanity**. We have to make judgements to discern right from wrong. He tells us to judge false teachers by their _____ (**Matthew 7:15-20**) and confront someone when they sin against you (**Matthew 18:15-20**), remove the speck from our brother's eye (**Matthew 7:1-5**). It's the difference between making a judgement and being judgmental. The difference is between *judging* and *condemning*. **It's the intention of the _____** Making a judgment about a person's sin in order to help them grow or to repair an issue in your relationship or conflict in the church are all focused on helping the situation and helping the person. Not about hurting the other person to make you feel better about yourself; ie "speaking evil against each other" like slander, gossip, and bullying. Which is the opposite of "speaking the truth in _____" to build others up (**Ephesians 4:29**). In **Matthew 7:1-5** Jesus speaks of the speck and the log, He didn't say not to *remove* the speck from your brother's eye. He said remove it from your own so you can see more clearly to take the speck out of their eye. **That's helpful!** If someone is struggling with sin the most helpful thing you can do is confront them about it, not let it go because you "don't want to judge."

The hypocrisy is calling out someone else's "speck" when you have a log in _____ own eye. The issue is people faking their faith, saying one thing and doing another. Saying they care about sin—other people's sin—while ignoring their own sin. Loving friends sharpen each other like iron sharpens _____ (**Proverbs 27:17**) They speak hard truths to each other in _____ (**Ephesians 4:15**) They care about healing their own sin and their friend's sin. WHY? BECAUSE THEY WANT TO HELP EACH OTHER GROW TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS!

3) Only God knows what the future holds James 4:13-17 and Proverbs 16:1-9

Q: What kind of attitude does it take to make plans, only "if God wills"?

Only God knows the future. Only God is omnipotent. Only God is sovereign. We aren't to sit around and wait for things to happen. But make our plans only in the context of God's will.