

A Call To Holiness – Selfish Christians

- James 4:1-6

- **James opens up chapter 4 in a unique way as he addresses wars and fightings ... not among our enemies or those that try to harm us, but within the family of God.**
 - What? Is it possible to have arguments & fights among the church? Sad to say, it is possible & too many times it happens on a routine basis.
- **James begins by asking, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"**
 - What is James talking about? What are we at war with in our own heart? The war in the heart that James is referring to is the battle of selfishness, more specific, selfish prayers.
 - Why did Eve disobey God? She wanted to eat of the tree and become wise like God.
 - Abraham lied about his wife because he selfishly wanted to save his own life.
 - We talked about a good one this morning, Achan caused defeat to Israel because he selfishly took some forbidden loot from the ruins of Jericho.
- **Selfish desires are dangerous things. They lead to *wrong actions* ("ye kill, ye fight and war,"), and they even lead to *wrong praying* ("When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures,").**
 - When our praying is wrong, our whole Christian life is wrong.
 - We must remember that the focus of our prayer life should never be primarily our will, but everything we ask must be in accordance with God's will.
- **People who are at war with themselves because of selfish desires are always unhappy people.**
 - They never enjoy life. Instead of being thankful for the blessings they do have, they complain about the blessings they do not have.
 - They cannot get along with other people because they are always envying others for what they have and do.
 - They are always looking for that something that will change their lives, when the real problem is within their own hearts.
 - They become so selfish & so focused on themselves that it changes who they are, it changes their focus, it changes their attitude, and it will even change their prayer life.
 - Instead of seeking God's will, we tell God what He is supposed to do; and we get angry at Him if He does not obey.
 - This anger at God eventually spills over and we get angry at God's people.
 - And then before you know it, we find ourselves completely out of the will of God.
- **James deals pointedly with this subject in the first few verses of chapter 4 & he claims that much of our battles & wars is because we ask in the wrong manner or we fail to ask at all.**
- **The Bible is very clear that prayer is an essential part of the Christian life. It is not something that would be helpful or a good idea. It is ESSENTIAL!**
- **With that being said, Jesus also give us a pattern of what & how we are to pray & we need to make sure that every prayer that comes from our lips follows this pattern.**
 - Matthew 6:5-15
 - Lifting Up God (v.9)
 - Praising Him for what He has done.
 - Praising Him for who He is.
 - Lifting Up His Plan (v.10)
 - Thanking Him that He has provided a plan for us.
 - Pleading with Him to better use us in His plan.

- Lifting Our Needs (v.11)
 - Material
 - Dr. Guthrie, that great Scotch preacher, prayed in the morning service for rain. As he went to church in the afternoon, little Mary, his daughter, said, “Here is the umbrella, Papa.” “What do we need it for?” he asked. “You prayed for rain this morning, and don’t you expect God will send it?” They carried the umbrella, and when they came home they were glad to take shelter under it from the drenching storm.
 - Spiritual
- Asking For Forgiveness (v.12)
 - Forgiveness of Sin
 - Forgiveness of Missed Opportunities To Serve Him
 - Forgiveness of Others
- Asking For Protection (v.13)
 - Physical
 - Spiritual