

The Epistle of  
**James**  
New Testament Letters Series



**Lesson 5-The Lord's Rebuke to our Sinfulness!**

**Focus: Ch. 4 v.1-17**

1. **Strivings of sin and failures to ask (v.1-2)** *Sinful attitudes and mindsets are the way of this world. They are behind all the wars and evil deeds of this world! Selfishness and evil plague the human heart—man is sinful. Only an all-powerful God could ever redeem us, to save us, even from our very own wicked selves. The heart of man "...is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked..." (Jeremiah 17:9). God has "called us out of darkness" that we might be in His "marvelous light" and show forth His praises (1 Peter 2:9). Most men are willing to fight, kick, and scratch to get whatever they want for themselves, but would they dare to do something so simple as to pray? "Ye have not, because ye ask not" says James! Ask!! (See Matthew 7:7,8). Do not live in sins, but instead, live in God and His self-sacrificing love!*
2. **The sins of worldly spirits and carnal desires prevent our success in God (v.3-6)** *When we pray, we should not ask selfishly or foolishly. We should not be lovers of the world either, but we should instead we should trust that God knows best, and we should be separate from worldliness and its great desire for material things. See also 1 John 2:15-17 to better understand the Christian's call to separation from the world. (For additional study you may also read 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). "God resists the proud, but He gives grace unto the humble." Therefore, we should not have a proud, evil, lusting, and selfish spirit, but rather, we should learn to have a heart after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).*
3. **A call for deep repentance from the sin and corruption within us (v.7-10)**
  - a. *The work of repentance is nothing to be taken lightly. It is extremely important in the process of healing from sin. We ought to have a broken heart for the wickedness of our sins, and truly we would if we saw ourselves in the right light, that is, as God sees us. Our sins are as blatantly red as scarlet when held up to the bright and glorious purity of Jesus Christ and His holy laws. Jesus says, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). Although this promise of comfort has some application to the sorrows or mourning of the general pains and sorrows of life, yet it has its even deeper application in the matters of sorrow for sin! We ought to repent "in dust and ashes" from our sins (Job 42:6). As the Holy Spirit convicts us of our deep and wretched sins, we should feel the weight of guilt, shame, and sorrow mounting because of them (John 16:8). Such a response should lead us to cry out from the depths of our soul as did the guilt-ridden sinners on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, "Men and brethren, What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Being "pricked in the heart" we are to feel the guilt, shame, sorrow, and weight of our sins. We are to see the enormity of our sin as it truly is in the eyes of an all-righteous, all-holy, perfect, blameless, all-loving, yet just, sin-hating God! "Rivers of waters" (Psalm 119:136) ought to run down our cheeks as we see the wretchedness and sinfulness of our breaking the holy laws of love established by Jehovah God Himself! "Let your laughter be turned to mourning" James says (4:9). See just for a moment in the right light how you have failed to live in true or perfect love to God and men.*
  - b. *(v.10) Our life is to change and we must "humble" ourselves in the sight of God, that He may truly "lift us up." For it is only He that can do it. It is only He who can restore us fully to our rightful*

place of peace with Him through the forgiveness and blood of His dear son Jesus Christ whose taken the weight of our sins upon Him, though He himself knew no sin (Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:4-6). Only Christ Jesus can save us! By confessing, forsaking, and repenting of our sins, we may have His sure mercies and salvation, praise be to God! (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; 2:1,2; Acts 2:38; Romans 5:8). His “mercies” are “new every morning” (Lamentations 3:22,23). Having been a wretched sinner we are fully qualified to receive His saving grace! **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” said Paul (1 Timothy 1:15; See also Isaiah 1:18 and Romans 5:20, 21).**

4. **Do not go around judging others (v.11,12)** Some try to act as high as the law and as if they themselves were the actual law or the standard for everyone else. Nothing could be further from the truth. None of us is to be a law for others. Only Jesus Christ and His law can stand in that place. It is not our duty to go around “judging another man’s servant” (See Romans 14:4). He is the one who must just. Certainly, we can see something with our eyes and say determine rightly that this thing is wrong. However, it is not our job to be the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10, that is Satan’s job), or to look for ways to judge others for their sins. God Himself will do so to all of His own servants, so we need not to worry about that (Matthew 25:19, 23-28).
5. **The uncertainty of life and the Lord’s plans for us vs. our own (v.13-17)** “The sincere Christian will make no plans which the Lord cannot approve,” and we should consider that we do not know what the future holds for us. We do not know what even a day may bring forth. Perhaps it could be our very last day to ever walk upon this earth, and we’d not know it until it was too late. Life is fragile and it can be lost more easily than we sometimes think. Our life is held in God’s hands, not our own. If God allowed, our time could expire at any moment. Because of the uncertainty of our lives and the Lord’s ultimate knowledge of these things we should always submit ourselves and any plans fully to Him! Let every possible plan or idea be made fully subject to Him! **For a sincere and godly Christian, even our speech should reflect the fact that we DO NOT KNOW what a day may bring forth and are entirely at the mercy of God. Therefore, we should say, “If the Lord wills...then let it be so.”** Any boasting of our own future plans “is evil” because we cannot know that and such boasting reveals a self-sufficient person who does not realize the Sovereign rule of God over their whole future. Tomorrow is a possibility, not a sure promise, and only God ultimately knows these things. We should trust Him, realize our place, and be thankful to Him for every day He gives us. Though we need to make plans for the future, yet let them always be subject to God’s plans and realize that He may choose to re-direct us. Be open to that and let your words be open to it. Do not boast before others, for then you may be ashamed to retract your words should God introduce another design or plan for your life at a later time. We should never “lean upon our own understanding” but let Him “direct our paths” in all things (Proverbs 3:5,6). Do the Lord’s revealed will, and fail not, lest it be sin to you (4:17).

### **Questions for the Heart:**

**Are you willing to surrender your heart to God and turn away from the sins of this world? \_\_\_\_** (will you pray for such to happen in your life today?)