



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion

James (Part-6) (Chapter 3, 4:1-7)

Earthly versus Heavenly wisdom (3: 13-18): What is the mark of a wise man? What is the root cause of confusion and evil? What are the eight attributes of heavenly wisdom?

Strife & unanswered prayers (4:1-7): What is the source of fighting among believers? Why are our prayers unanswered? Who is the enemy of God? How can we be a witness without befriending the world? Who finds favor in God's eyes? How do we overcome strife? Who is closer to us: Devil or God? ... How do we overcome devil? How do we draw nigh to God?

Application: *Is strife among believers inconsistent with our Christian faith?*

The Power of Tongue

from last
week

Tongue is small part of body but exercises great influence (for good or for evil)

No man can tame tongue ... so we need the grace of God

We must not worship God and curse with the same tongue

We have to give account for every word we speak.
If our words are corrupt or not edifying, better to be silent!

Mark of the Wise

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

Good Conduct

Deeds done in Meekness

No Bitterness or envy

No selfish ambitions

No Lying



Reverse
it for
Mark of
a Fool

Earthly Wisdom

¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic

16 For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there

Earthly, Sensual, Demonic

Envy and selfishness leads to confusion & Evil

Does envy and selfishness arise in church? What has been the result?

Heavenly Wisdom (17-18)

Pure ... holy or devoid of sin, pure intent

Peaceable ... produces peace, not conflict

Gentle .. mild or meek

Willing to yield ... not stubborn (like the mule) or unteachable

Merciful... wiling to forgive rather than judge/ condemn/punish

Good Fruits/works

No partiality

No hypocrisy

Contrasting Outcomes

- **Heavenly wisdom** leads to peace

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (18)

- **Earthly wisdom** leads to confusion and every evil thing (16)

Are our relationships characterized by peace or confusion?

How can we receive
heavenly wisdom?



How can we receive heavenly wisdom?

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God (James 1:5)

(note, the original context is for wisdom to deal with trials)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (Proverbs 9:10)



Chapter 4:1-7

Strife & Unanswered Prayers

Are you facing strife in any of your relationship? Do you know the reason? Do you know the solution?

STRIFE

- Are you facing strife in any of your relationships?
- Do you know the reason?
- Do you have a solution?

Strife ... not uncommon

Strife in family: Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him (Genesis 4:8)

Strife in church: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! (Galatians 5:14-15)

Strife among leaders: Then the **contention became so sharp** that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, (Acts 15:39-40)

And many more examples of strife...

Strive for Unity ... not Strife

Prayer of Jesus: that they may be one just as we are one
(John 17:21)

Paul's desire: I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be
of the same mind in the Lord. (Philippians 4:2)

Blessing of Unity: Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity! For there
the Lord commanded the blessing— Life forevermore
(Psalms 133)

Source of Strife?

Where do wars and fights *come* from among you?

Do *they* not *come* from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (1)

Not others

But You

Your (ungodly) Desires

Your members at war (conflict between flesh & spirit) ... the greatest war for all believers

Outcome of Strife in church



Outcome of
Strife in
church

Divisions

Damaged relationships

Tainted testimony

Growth of God's work hindered

LUST

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. (2)

Lust is wrongful desires

Lack of contentment due to unfulfilled desires

When we don't get what we desire:

we get frustrated and angry (~murder, Mathew 5:21-22)

we fight

we go to war

Unanswered prayers

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures (3)

No prayers made (you ask not!)
(2)

Ask with wrong motive
(selfish desires) (3)

Answered prayers

Prayers aligned with His Will: Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (I John 5:14)

Prayers backed by obedience: And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (I John 3:22)

Prayers from a cleansed heart: Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:1-2)

#2 Source of strife (Adultery, World)

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

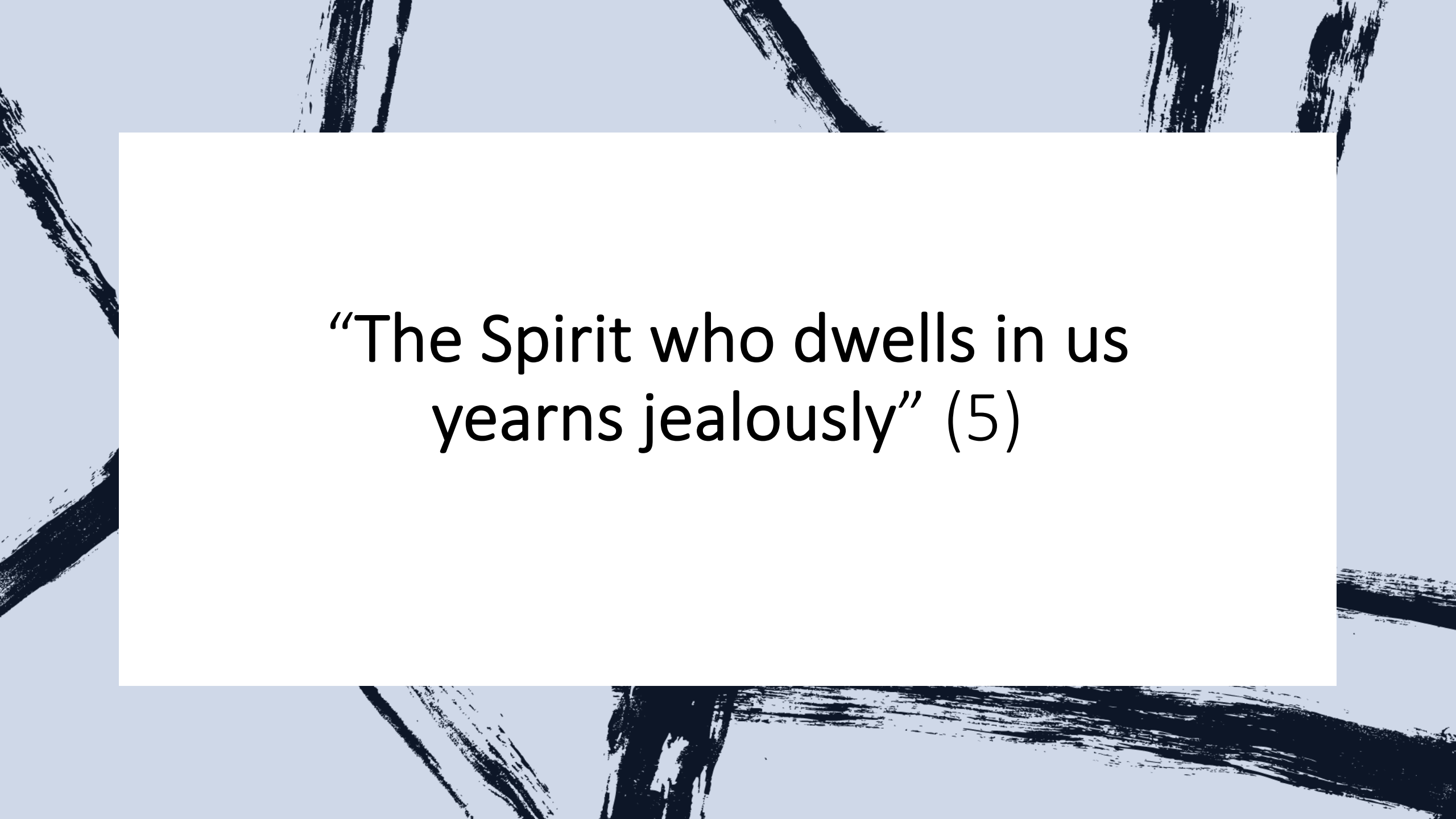
Friendship with the World is adultery

- Surely, *as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel,”* says the Lord. (Jeremiah 3:20)
- For **your Maker is your husband,**
The Lord of hosts *is* His name;
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth (Isaiah 54:5)

Fellowship
with the
world leads
to worldly
perspective

How can we be a witness to the world
without being friendly with the world?
(friendship evangelism)

Do not love the world or the things in the
world. If anyone loves the world, the love of
the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the
world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the
eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the
Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15-16)



“The Spirit who dwells in us
yearns jealously” (5)

But He gives more grace. (6)

Great Promise!

How to
resolve
strife?

Receive His Grace.

Judge yourself first

Separate yourself from the world
and its views

Humble yourself to God and to one
another. Don't fight fire with fire.



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