

James “*Confronting Counterfeit Christianity*”
“*When Faith Comes Alive*” (James 3:13 – 4:17)

~ INTRO ~

WHEN STEPHANI AND I WERE FIRST MARRIED...

- We had this old Jeep that guzzled gas...
 - With how broke we were...
 - Filling it up felt like a major investment every time.
- So we started looking at other options
 - Landed on a brand new Toyota Corolla!

BECAUSE WE WERE YOUNG & THE JEEP WAS OLD...

- The trade-in value was low and the monthly payment on the Corolla...
 - Was way more than we should've taken on.
 - So we called Steph's dad—Pastor Jeff—to get his take.

HE COULD TELL WE WERE FIRED UP ABOUT THE CAR...

- But he gave us some wise advice
 - “*Sleep on it. Take a day or two before you commit.*”

BUT... WE WERE YOUNG

- Were sure we knew what we were doing.
 - So we went ahead and bought the car anyway.

IT TURNED OUT TO BE A TERRIBLE DECISION.

- We ended up super upside down in the loan and regretting it not long after.
- Why? Because we didn't listen to wisdom.
 - We weren't willing to yield to sound counsel.
 - That phrase “*willing to yield*”
 - is one of the key marks James gives us for godly wisdom.

SO MANY CHRISTIANS FIND THEMSELVES IN THE SAME SPOT...

- Faced with a big decision & wondering...
 - “*How Do I know if this is from God?*”
 - “*How Do I know if the Lord is leading me in this?*”

~ RECAP ~

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TODAY WE’RE CONTINUING IN...

- Our study thru the book of James...
 - Where he “*Confronts Counterfeit Christianity*”
 - By speaking to the faith of believers...
 - And pointing out the inconsistencies in their lives.
- A faith that looks good on the outside & says the right things...
 - But under the surface doesn’t line up with Christian doctrine.
- James teaches the church about authentic faith...
 - That’s not just claimed but proven!

SO FAR WE’VE LEARNED...

- How “*When Faith Gets Real.*”
 - When I’m tested
 - When I’m tempted
 - When I have to obey.
- How “*Faith Proves Real*”
 - In my motives
 - In my actions
 - In my speech

TODAY... JAMES IS GOING TO SHOW US...

- The difference between man-made wisdom...
 - And the wisdom that comes from God.
 - So we can filter our decisions accordingly.
- The results of allowing earthly wisdom to take root in our heart...
 - Moving us to a divided loyalty.
- How pride can show up in my daily mindset...
 - Whether I seek God for direction & planning.
- So I’ve titled today’s message...
 - “*When Faith Comes Alive*”

~ IDEA 1 – A Filter For My Decisions (3:13-18) ~

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(v. 13)

IN (CHAPTER 1) JAMES TELLS US TO ASK FOR WISDOM...

- And here James gives us the indicators of...
 - Whether that wisdom is actually from “above”...
 - Or just a spiritualized version of worldly thinking.

(vv. 14-17)

HERE’S THE TEST:

- Worldly wisdom = Self centered
 - Looks like = Envy / jealousy / selfish ambition / disorder
 - Earthly (temporal value)
 - Unspiritual (secular)
 - Gratifies our natural desires over moral boundaries
 - Demonic (spiritually influenced from opposing forces)
 - (1 John 2:15-16) NLT
- Heavenly wisdom = Others focused / heavenly influenced
 - Looks like =
 - Peaceable & gentle (not contentious)
 - Willing to yield (take advice or teachable)
 - Full of mercy / good deeds (thinks about others)
 - Without partiality / hypocrisy (Aligns with profession)

(v. 18)

THIS IS THE RESULT OF HEAVENLY WISDOM...

- Planting seeds of peace (in my relationships)
 - Harvesting a godly lifestyle.

IS THIS DECISION PRODUCING...

- Peace, gentleness, humility, mercy...
 - Or is it stirring up selfish ambition, comparison, and pride?

HERE’S WHY IT MATTERS...

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- Because the ideology of a follower of Jesus...
 - Should contradict the way the world operates.
- But counterfeit Christianity adopts the same values & methods...
 - As the world—just with a religious label slapped on.

HERE’S A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE...

- The wisdom of the world looks at a job offer and says:
 - *It’s a bump in pay, in a nicer area, with better benefits...*
 - *it must be God!*
- But godly wisdom says:
 - *Wait—have I even asked the Lord what He wants?*
 - *Does this align with the calling He’s already given me?*
 - *Will this decision deepen my walk with Him*
 - *or distract from it?*

FOLLOWING JESUS MEANS...

- Filtering every decision through His guidance...
 - Not just following what looks good on paper!

~ IDEA 2 – The Effects of Earthly Wisdom (4:1-12) ~

(v. 1)

NEXT JAMES SPEAKS TO AN ISSUE HIS DISCIPLES WERE HAVING...

- Because they were allowing worldly wisdom to take root in their heart...
 - Leading to fighting & quarreling among them.
- We tend to think it would be reasonable to for unbelievers to fight...
 - But this is found in the Church!
- Although the conflict was externally seen...
 - The sources was internally fueled from selfish desires clashing.

(vv. 2-3)

TO THE PERSON WHO SAYS IT’S EVERYONE ELSE’S FAULT...

- He holds up a mirror to show the true source – me!

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- My own pride / jealousy / & desire for physical gratification.
 - Wrong desires / wrong behaviors / wrong motives

(vv. 4-6)

JAMES GOES ON TO IDENTIFY THE ROOT OF THE ISSUE...

- Comes down to spiritual adultery in the life of the believer.
 - Because earthly wisdom has created a divided loyalty...
 - Where we align our thinking with the world...
 - While claiming to follow Jesus.

HE’S TELLING THE CHURCH...

- If our behavior looks like what we see in these verses...
 - We’re not just off-track in our walk with Jesus...
 - We’re in direct opposition to God!
 - That’s not a subtle statement!
- The fact that he repeats it in the same verse...
 - Shows just how serious he is.

IN OTHER WORDS...

- When we want what the world offers...
 - Think the way the world thinks...
 - Act the way the world acts...
 - Our faith isn’t real because our loyalty is divided.

- (v. 8) “*two-spirited*”

- Trying to live for God while chasing the world.

(Vv. 7-10)

BUILDING OF HIS QUOTE IN (V. 6)...

- James gives us the pathway forward...
 - Humility & repentance.

I LIKE TO REMEMBER THE THREE “R’s” OF REPENTANCE...

- *Recognize* (v. 7)

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➤ It starts with admitting

- “I’m wrong” / my mindset / my desires / my behaviors
 - Not aligned with You”
- It’s not just feeling bad...
 - It’s recognizing that you’ve been going your own way...
 - And need to surrender.

- Resist (v. 7)

- Repentance isn’t a passive act – it’s a spiritual battle...
 - If you’re submitting to God then you’re already winning...
 - Just like Jesus did in (Matthew 4).
- Now you’re no longer walking in agreement with the enemy...
 - And scripture promises he will flee.

- Rejoice (v.8)

- When you take that step back to the Lord...
 - You don’t find condemnation – you find grace!
- Repentance leads to restoration not rejection.
 - Rejoice because God draws near to the humble.

~ IDEA 3 – Pride In My Mindset (4:11-17) ~

JUST LIKE THE PREVIOUS SECTIONS...

- Confront internal patterns of...
 - Worldly thinking and selfish desires.
- This one confronts internal prideful mindset...
 - That makes me:
 - Judge others from a place of superiority...
 - Assume authority over my everyday life choices.

(vv. 11-12)

JAMES WARNS AGAINST...

- Playing God in someone else’s life...
 - Not just by pointing out sin...

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- But by criticizing & judging a believers obedience.
- He draws the line between God’s role as judge...
 - And ours as followers.
- By confronting the type of judgement...
 - That flows from **pride**
 - (elevating myself over others & above the law)
 - Not **love**
 - (I want to lift you out of unhealthy behaviors)

HERE’S WHAT JAMES ISN’T DOING...

- Not banning all discernment or correction...
 - Which scripture clearly teaches the church
 - (Matt. 7:6 / Gal. 6:1 / John 7:24)
- He’s aiming at the motive and heart behind judgement...
 - Not the act itself!

(vv. 13-17)

FINALLY JAMES CALLS...

- The false authority we give ourselves...
 - When it comes to planning our everyday choices.

THE TRUTH IS...

- James isn’t condemning planning...
 - He’s calling out **presuming**.
- (v. 13) His verbiage reflects a self-directed mindset
 - That leaves God out.
- (v. 14) This type of confidence is arrogant (prideful)...
 - Because we don’t even know what tomorrow will hold.
 - (Luke 12:20) NLT

JAMES REMINDS US...

- (v. 17) In a culture of planning and projecting success...
 - We’re not in control of our lives...

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- God is!

IN THIS LAST SECTION...

- James teaches us that humility isn't just about how we treat others...
 - It's how we view ourselves in relation to God.

PRIDE SAYS...

- I'll run my life...
 - I'll speak how I want...
 - I'll go where I feel is right.

HUMILITY SAYS...

- Lord, what do you want?
- Following Jesus comes alive in my everyday mindset!

~ IN CLOSING (CALL WORSHIP TEAM) ~