

Part 5 - Guarding Against Worldliness

Kingdom Collective

Series: Book of James

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James 4:1-17 ESV

Central Truth: Guarding against worldliness looks like embracing ongoing humility.

Verses 1-4

- v1 - Your passions (pleasures) are at war within you
- LASB footnote - *There's nothing wrong with pleasure. But having friendship with the world involves seeking pleasure at the expense of obeying God.*
- v4 - *adulterous people is metaphorical for those who break their vow to God and chase idols instead*
 - James is referring to an affair with the world.
 - An affair with worldliness results in separation *from* God and hostility *with* God.

Defining worldliness:

- Having more concern with the temporary things of this world than the eternal calling of God.
- **1 John 2:15-17**
- Attributes of Worldliness:
 - Worldliness looks like selfishness
 - Worldliness opposes God
 - Worldliness leads to death
 - Proverbs 14 and 16 - There's a way that seems right to a man...
 - In the world what seems like life leads to death (Genesis 3).
 - In the kingdom, what seems like death leads to life.
 - Worldliness is the opposite of the Kingdom of God.
 - Worldliness isn't referring to the planet earth. It refers to the system by which the world operates under the dominion of satan.
 - **Ephesians 2:1-4** - And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God...

Verses 5-7

- v5 - God wants you. Although it's technically accurate to say that He doesn't *need* you, what's more significant is that He actually wants you.
 - i.e. Uncle Sam picture
 - Our longing for love is a longing to be wanted. To be pursued. To be longed for.
- NLT (1996 ed.) v5-6 - "...The Holy Spirit whom God has placed within us jealously longs for us to be faithful. He gives us more and more strength to stand against such evil desires..."

James 4:7-12

- Action words: submit, resist, draw near, cleanse, purify, humble yourself
- The result of guarding against worldliness leads to kingdom action.

The Parallel to Daniel in Babylon

- Daniel and his friends were taken captive when Judah was conquered and was deported to Babylon.
- Babylon was a city that engaged in the worst kind of idolatry and was the epitome of human rebellion against God, aka worldliness.
- Daniel and his friends were setting themselves apart, guarding against worldliness.
- King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image 90' tall and 9' wide
- **Illustration**

Back to the early Church (the context of James' writing)

- Babylon was a foreshadow of the Roman empire. All must come under Roman authority. All must bow to Caesar.
- It is in this context that Paul wrote Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind
- Wide is the gate that leads to destruction, narrow is the way that leads to life.
 - The path to worldliness is wide, easy to find. The path to godliness requires constant recalibration to stay on the narrow way.

The world we live in today is a modern day Babylon, but the call is found in these last few verses.

James 4:13-17

1. Be an unashamed friend of God
2. Uphold the standard of Christian living
3. Be a witness to the world

Central Truth: Guarding against worldliness looks like embracing ongoing humility.

Prayer: "Without you, I can't. With you, I can. Lord, I want more of you in my life."