



## No: 9 James - Murder in the Church

### **James 4:1-12**

According to God there is more murder takes place in the Church than in the world. The strife, discord and feuds that take place in Church today originate from our own selfish desires that are constantly fighting within us. We have desires for what others have this can be good things which we think would benefit ourselves and we have very selfish reasons. This gives rise to jealousy and covetousness and so we hate, which is murder in God's eyes **1 John 3:15**.

We burn with envy and anger and do not obtain gratification, contentment or satisfaction for the happiness we are seeking and so we fight and war, **James 4:1-2 AMP**. We are very good at acting in a superficial, kind, way but when others are blessed by God with something we need or want our heart is wrong. When God seems to answer their prayers quicker than He does ours, we rise up and the last thing we think of is that we have asked wrongly or that we have wrong motives, **James 4:3**.

All these reactions just serve to show us that the 'old man' is very much alive, and we still have not completely died to ourselves and living totally for Christ, **Galatians 2:20**. We want to enjoy any benefits that the world passes our way **and** have the security of belonging to the Kingdom of God. James under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit calls this behaviour 'adultery'. This is being committed to one person but playing around with someone else. This never helps our commitment to Jesus and certainly never gives any satisfaction as neither relationship is a whole hearted one. Worse still the Word declares that the sort of person who is committing this adultery is an enemy of God, **James 4:4**.

Adultery very rarely starts off with the act of adultery at the beginning but it starts with a thought, which is then fed with lots of thinking and planning time, deception of us and others, long before the act of adultery becomes a reality. The thinking and planning time for adultery with the world steals time which we could have used to put more love, communication and joy into our real relationship with the living God, **Matthew 6:33**. If we think this application through, we can see why the Holy Spirit likens love of the world to adultery! Love of the world can be very real because it involves all our senses, leading to actions of the flesh. But our love of God is set in our inner spirit which is sealed by His Spirit. Often our feelings so dominate our reactions that it is so much easier to respond to the demands of the world than the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**Answer.** This is found in **James 4:6**, God gives grace to the humble. All we need is His amazing grace that will enable us to flee from the temptation of the world. Just like with adultery we have to turn our back completely on the pull of the other person, so we must refuse to conform to the world's image and so be transformed by the renewing of our mind, then we can be changed more and more to be like Jesus, **Romans 12:1,2**.

**1 Peter 5:5** AMP states "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility (as the garb of a servant, so that it's covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance) toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful) and He opposes, frustrates and defeats them, but gives grace (favour, blessing) to the humble". As our spirit is more and more devoted and set apart for God we will only have peace as we are being led by the Holy Spirit and the things of the flesh will loose their attraction. 'Little children you are of God (you belong to Him) and have already defeated and overcome them (the agents of the antichrist) because He who lives in you is greater (mightier) than he who is in the world'. **1 John 4:4**

Jesus just longs for us to be really passionate for Him, **James 4:5** and as we depend on the Holy Spirit to walk in the way of humility then more and more the Holy Spirit will be available to us and we receive grace to help us in our time of need, **James 4:6**. God is not putting impossible demands on us as 'He gives us all we need for life and godliness' In order to walk this exciting

and fulfilling life of love and humility, instead of strife and selfish ambition, we become totally sold – out to Jesus and by His grace we have His mind and His heart, **Philippians 2:5**.

**Confession time:** If you identify with causing strife either at home or in the community, and you are in love with the world, materialism, ungodly standards etc: 'come close to God and He will come close to you. (Recognise that you are) sinners, get your soiled hands clean; (realise that you have been disloyal) wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts (of your spiritual adultery). (As you draw near to God) be deeply penitent and grieve, even weep (over your disloyalty). Let your laughter be turned to grief and your mirth to dejection and heartfelt shame (for your sins). Humble yourselves (feeling very insignificant) in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you (He will lift you up and make your lives significant).' **James 4:8-10**

1. Acknowledge that all possessions and gifts and talents come from Him; give each individually back to Him.
2. Repent that the worldly emphasis has been put on these and they have not been viewed as God has looked on them, turn your back on the wrong attitudes.
3. Ask God to fill you with His pure, holy, love for all these things that He has given you. Consider your priorities, are there any changes that need to be made or activities laid down?
4. Give thanks to God for His complete cleansing, filling with His Holy Spirit, and direction for a new unadulterous, double-minded life.

**Psalm 51:10 'Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me'.**

God always answers our prayers but does not always answer them the way we want them answered. This is always for our own good as He knows exactly why we have asked, what our motives are, and what we are going to do when He has answered, **James 4:3**. If we asked to be a 'successful bible study leader' so people would think we were super-spiritual God would not want to grant this as we were asking with wrong motives.

But He may answer by putting someone in the group who had a lot of problems, or were difficult so that we had to call on His wisdom more than ever, and we could not get puffed up with pride. Everything we do and ask for must point people to look at Jesus. We need to pray for the mind of Christ and then we know how to pray in various situations, but if in doubt pray in the Spirit as He is guaranteed to pray the will of God **Romans 8:26-28; Ephesians 6:18**. Never forget that God wants our best more than we do and He is no spoil sport. Jesus came especially so we can have and enjoy life and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows), **John 10:10**

### **Grace - God's Rest At Christ's Expense**

'For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favour) that you are saved (delivered from judgement and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through your faith. And this (salvation) is not of yourselves (of your own doing, it came not through your own striving) but it is the gift of God. Not because of works (not the fulfilment of the Law's demands) lest any man should boast', **Ephesians 2:8,9**.

It is a mistake to think that there is no law in the New Testament and that grace is an easy-going, do-as-you-please concept. Having been justified freely by His grace, our motive as believers for keeping the law of Christ is love and gratitude (**1 John 4:19**).

If we apply this amazing grace to our own lives it also challenges us to check out how we look at others so all the attitude of murder, discords, and feuds described at the beginning of this study can be looked at with eyes of grace. Remember how much we have been forgiven then it is easy to accept other people's short comings or mistakes.

When King David committed adultery and murder as a result of lust of the flesh he was challenged by the man of God, Nathan. By God's grace alone David admitted his wrong, repented, and although he suffered the consequences of his sin, he picked his life up and moved on to do amazing things for God. Read **Psalm 51** for David's prayer of sorrow.

**Do all things without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining against God and questioning and doubting among yourselves, Philippians 2:14**

## The Real Church Home Challenges 09

### Read the notes about 'Murder in the Church'

1. What do you think is the main cause of conflict in your Church, work, home or relationships?
2. According to these verses and reading what do you feel is the answer to strife? Is this relevant to you and are you willing to do anything about it?
3. What points or verses will help you to walk closer to God?
4. Do you recognize God's grace in your life and could you write out what you have received because of grace.

### Read James 4:13-17 Pray before you begin 'Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your law'.

5. According to **James 4:13** how do people talk when making plans and what is the motive?
6. How do you personally make plans? Are you reactive or proactive?
7. Has there ever been a time in your life when you have made plans and something has gone very wrong and it was not possible to follow your plans through. Did you know looking back that it turned out for your good?
8. Consider the point 'What is your life?' **James 4:14** What is your answer and does any verse of the Bible come into your heart?

9. What drives your life? Love? Materialism? Need for approval? Other points

10. What does God say here should be the driving force in our life? **James 4:15**

11. Are you making your own plans or are you praying for guidance from God's will? Do you tend to make your own plans and then ask God to bless them? Give an example.

12. Look up these verses and make points to help you know how to find God's will for your life.  
**Psalms 32:8;**

**Proverbs 3:5-6;**

**Proverbs 16:3;**

**Isaiah 30:21;**

**Romans 8:13-14.**

13. Read **James 4:17** and ask God to show you anything He wants you to do and ask for the Holy Spirit's power to obey. Is there anything you know you should do but you are not bothering?

14. What does James call this? Read **1 John 1:9** pray and rejoice in God's forgiveness.

15. Sum up in one short sentence what you have learnt in this study.