

Bible Studies

A Jealous God?

Read James 4v1-6



Desire

Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:14-15 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:4

According to James desire is the root of sin.

In James 4v2 what does desire result in?

The Bible records two incidents where desire did result in murder.

1 Kings 21 Naboth's Vineyard

2 Samuel 11 David & Bathsheba

At the outset did either intend to murder anyone?

How then did it end in death?

What sort of desires is James talking about?

What is the goal of the desires James describes? v3

Why do they lead to sin?

What things should we ask God for?

They say that what you think about, you will eventually do. If you want to control sin, you have to take action at the desire stage.

If evil desires lead to evil actions do you think godly desires will lead to acts of righteousness? Proverbs 11v23



Friendship

All of this is just a springboard for the point James wants to make. It looks like his readers have been desiring the wrong things. It seems that friendship with the world has been their goal.

You adulterous people (lit. *you adulteress*). The language James uses is deliberate. Adultery is a term frequently used by the OT prophets to describe Israel's unfaithfulness. *Jeremiah 13:27*

What comparison is James making?

Look at the following Passages

John 15:18-19

John 17:14

1 John 2v15-17

What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on ... those who use the things of the world, [should live] as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

When John says that we must not love the world which of the following do you think He means?

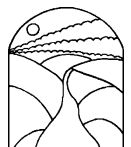
Do not love the nature that God has created.

Do not enjoy life.

Do not set your heart on the material things of this world.

Don't get caught up in the world's way of doing things.

What does John mean by World?



He doesn't mean the planet we live on, God made it for us and intended it to be a place of enjoyment for us. He means the world's way of doing things. The wrong actions, wrong attitudes, wrong desires and wrong beliefs of the people that we live among.

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 1 Peter 2:11

How are we aliens and strangers?

What is likely to happen to us if we 'love the world?'

James says that to love the world is to hate God. This is strong language. Perhaps it needs to be tempered by comparing Luke 14v26 (literal) with Matthew 10v37 (meaning).

Why can't you love the world and God both together?

The bottom line is they are opposites and in opposition. Jesus makes the same point when He says you cannot serve two masters, Matthew 6v24. Before we were saved, we were enemies of God, Romans 5:10, we do not want to return to that position.

The believer who is the world's friend, is guilty of spiritual adultery.

Can anything that leads you away from God be good for you?

You must *keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27*

It is an ongoing tension to be in the world but not of the world. We must find the balance.

What are the two extremes?



Jealousy

Now we get to the heart of what James is saying *Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? James 4:5*

This verse is hard to translate, the NIV gives two alternative translations. 'That the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously'. Or 'God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us.' This last one is probably the best translation.

The Spirit He put in us is the Holy Spirit, specifically His work in Salvation and making us into a new creation.

James is not quoting a single verse but he probably has Exodus 34v14, or Deuteronomy 4v24, in mind:

Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14 (Exodus 20:5)

For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. Deuteronomy 4:24 Deu 5v9

Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. Josh 24:19

Most of the passages that describe God as jealous, are written in the context of Idolatry.

In what way is God a jealous God?

What is He jealous for?

Does God have the right to be jealous for our lives?

What response does our unfaithfulness elicit in God?

To answer this last question is to understand what *jealous* means. God is jealous for our time, our love our obedience. *A husband or wife who felt no jealousy at the intrusion of a lover or adulterer into their home would surely be lacking in moral perception.* Tasker TNTC
God is faithful to us, He expects us to be faithful to Him.

Are man's jealousy and God's jealousy the same?

What makes them different?

Human jealousy tends to be possessive, but God does not force Himself on us, rather He has give us freedom to respond to Him, or reject Him. Human Jealousy leads to harm and ill will, God jealousy to abounding grace.4v6.

If nothing else this verse tells us that God feels passionately about you. You matter, your actions matter. **What effect does this have on you?**

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Kill

covet

quarrel

fight

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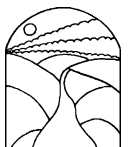
What does John mean by World?

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