

# 11. My Way

Frank Sinatra who sang this song and made it famous. Indeed, in this world we often consider a person who overcome the difficulties and obstacles and get on the top of a ladder, as a leader or self made millionaire or billionaire. So they've got their way. No matter what it costs to themselves or their families or friends or other people around, they made their goals. Then what? Are they going to make another goal and go after it? At whose cost this time? We see tons of people who seek opportunities to get on the top fast even if they have to sell their mothers' graves.

That is the worldly way. What about Christian's way? Are they different than the worldly way? Let's take a good look at it. Obviously this Jewish Christian churches were having a hard time among their members. The chapter 4 of James is talking about

"Warning against worldliness" such as:

**Quarrelsomeness & Covetousness (v.1-2)**

**Unanswered Prayers because of selfishness (v. 3)**

**Spiritual Unfaithfulness & Pride (v. 4-10)**

**Slander (v. 11-12)**

**Boasting (v. 13-17)**

None of these things listed above should be in the mind of believers of Jesus Christ. But the fact is that you and I both have these in our hearts and we have battles against them daily. Sometimes we win through the power of Jesus, sometimes we lose because of our carnal desires.

## A. QUARRELSOMNESS & COVETOUSNESS

*James 4:1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*

The definition of covetousness is the excessive desire to get that which belongs to others or having a craving for another's possessions. This has been the cause of most wars.

*Ex 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."*

It is the last one of Ten Commandments.

*James 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*

The word, 'LUST' we find here is "epithumeo" in Greek. It means seeking things forbidden. We may not kill in real life, but if we have the very thoughts in our minds, it is no different than actually doing it. 'Kill' or 'murder' in different translations means 'HATE'.

*1 John 3:15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

God gave us conscience in our hearts to tell the difference between good and bad. We know that we should be content with what we have, but we want more than what we have.

There is a tremendous difference between "Wishing to have something someday" and "Wanting that particular thing or person no matter what". All of our sins are

coming from one source: Selfishness. We want what we want now, not later, now at any cost.

When we ask God to supply what we want or need, we should not demand Him to provide whatever we say so.

**Reason 1)** He doesn't owe us anything. As a matter of fact, we are the one who owes Him everything.

**Reason 2)** He is not a gigantic vending machine in heaven and waiting for us to put 25 cent worth of prayer and push a button.

But our God is a gracious God to provide everything we need according to His riches in His glory (Phil 4:19). And He also gives us the desires of our hearts.

*Ps 37:4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

What should be the desires of our heart as a Christians? Ferrari? Cruise Tours? Two story mansion? Big fat bank account? CEO of the big company? or pleasing the Lord our God and having a close fellowship with Him?

Didn't the Word tell us that seek His kingdom and His righteousness first, all these thing we need will be added onto us (Matt. 6:33)?

## **B. UNANSWERED PRAYERS BECAUSE OF SELFISHNESS**

*James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

Reason for unanswered prayer: because they are for the gratification of our worldly pleasures.

Our prayers should align with God's will.

## **C. SPIRITUAL UNFAITHFULNESS AND PRIDE**

*James 4:4 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.*

In this short passage from v1-v10, James managed to put four of Ten commandments. Here we can notice that he is talking about the first commandment.

*Ex 20:3 You shall have no other gods before Me.*

What is the meaning of 'enmity'? 'Echthra' in Greek word. It means hatred, not just not liking someone, but despising with passion.

An expansion of Jesus' statement that a person cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt 6:24), and similar to John's warning against love of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

*1 John 2:15-17 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

*James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?*

Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than He (1 Cor. 10:22)? It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of angry God. The Word told us that either we are for Him or against Him. There is no gray area, there is no happy medium. We cannot be double minded people.

*Ex 20:4-5 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

These double minded people are most miserable people. Because if we do that, we are one of these double minded people, the world think that we are stinky, weird Christian, so they really don't want us in their group. And they also mock us for our worldly actions. The same time we are miserable, because we know the Word of God enough, for the Holy Spirit to convict us constantly.

*James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

This verse comes from Proverbs 3:34.

Between v. 7-10, these verses contain 10 commands, each of which is so stated in Greek that it calls for immediate action in rooting out the sinful attitude of pride.

*James 4:7 (1) Therefore submit to God.*

*(2) Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

*James 4:8 (3) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

*(4) Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and*

*(5) purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Before the OT priests approached God at the tabernacle, they had to wash their hands and feet at the bronze basin as a symbol of spiritual cleansing (Ex 30:17-21)

*James 4:9 (6) Lament,*

*(7) mourn and*

*(8) weep!*

*(9) Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*

(6) to (9) Shows Repentance

*James 4:10 (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

*Matt 23:12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

Notice the sequence of (1) through (10)? We can picture the sinner coming to the Throne of Grace & Mercy step by step. Every step requires our own decisions. God will prepare the way, but He will not force us to do anything. He wants us to take that important steps first.

## **D. APPLICATION**

The above passages suggest the need of unceasing Self-Examination. For having to live in the world, and worldly things being needful to our daily subsistence, it requires great watchfulness to keep our affection above the border line. We need to constantly to DRAW NEAR TO HIM, to CLEANSE OUR HANDS, to PURIFY OUR HEART and to HUMBLE OURSELVES.