

- Church Web Site

[www.tryonchurchofchrist.com](http://www.tryonchurchofchrist.com)

All sermons are posted here  
plus additional resources



A just weight  
and balance

are the  
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- As we begin James Chapter 4  
James is setting  
before us  
and all Christians  
a basic question.

- What is the aim in life?
- Is it to submit to the will of God
  - Or our own desires?

- And he warns that,  
**if pleasure**  
is the policy of life,
  - Nothing but
    - **Strife**,
    - **Hatred**,
    - **Division**can possibly follow.

- **In James 4:1-10**

we see the source of our

**conflict with man,**

- And our

**conflict with God,**

- And the source of our

**conflict resolution.**

- James gets straight to the heart of life's conflicts.
- We like to blame things like our anger on something else.
- We think to ourselves, ***"If this would change then I would no longer be angry"***.

- James would have us  
look at the  
**source of our conflicts.**

- **Conflict**  
wrecks all sorts of  
**human relationships.**



- **The pursuit of pleasure**  
must be regarded  
by every Christian  
as a:
  - **Fruitless**
  - **Dangerous course,**
  - Loaded with all kinds of  
**disastrous consequences.**

- The root cause of life's bitter conflict is nothing other than desire.

- Philo,  
the Jewish philosopher  
points out that the  
Ten Commandments  
culminate in the  
*forbidding of covetousness*,  
for desire is the  
worst of all the passions  
of the soul.  
(Exodus 20:17)

- **Desire**

is at the root of all the evils  
which ruin life  
and divide men.

- The New Testament is clear that this overmastering desire for the pleasures of this world **is always a threatening danger** to the spiritual life.

- It is the **cares** and **riches** and **pleasures** of this life which combine **to choke the good seed** (**Luke 8:14**).

- A man can become **a slave to passions** and pleasures.

- **Titus 3:3**

*For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various **passions and desires**, spending our lives in **evil and envy**, hateful and hating one another.*

- **The ultimate choice in life**  
lies between:
  - Pleasing **oneself**
  - Pleasing **God**;
    - And if  
**the aim**  
is pleasing one's self  
life becomes  
a battleground of  
**savagery** and **division**.

- Whenever there is conflict, one or both parties are not pleasing God.

- For God is a “God of Peace”.  
(Romans 15:33)

- We could spend our entire lives attempting to unravel the specifics of conflict.
- Thankfully, the Scriptures make it simple.
- At the heart of all relational conflict is a failure to please God.
  - This truth can redirect us to focus on what really matters:
    - Pleasing God.



- James 4:1 (NET)

shows that

the source of our conflict:

- *Where do the conflicts and where do the quarrels among you come from?*

- *Is it not from this,*

- *from your passions*

- that battle inside you?

- The source of all relational conflict **is a failure to please God.**
- As seen in our **inordinate desires**  
(James 4:2)
- As seen in our **lack of proper asking**  
(James 4:2)
- As seen in our asking with **the wrong motives**  
(James 4:3)

- Some of the evils James enumerates are the kinds of wrongdoing we have almost come to expect among saints:

- conflicts,
- quarrels,
- and envy.

- The fact that there is conflict among the saints to whom James is writing should come as no surprise to us.

- We find the disciples arguing among themselves about who was the greatest (**Mark 9:33-34**).
- We find divisions regarding lawsuits among the Corinthian saints (**1 Corinthians 1:11-12; 6:1-6**).

- Even the wonderful church at Philippi had two women who were at odds with each other (**Philippians 4:1-3**).
- The difference here is that James tells us this conflict even led to murder (James 4:2; 5:6).

- But it seems as though James is going a bit far when he adds “murder” to the list,
  - Not just in verse 2, but also later on in James 5:6.

- **Is James exaggerating?**
  - I think he meant us to understand the term **literally.**
  - He is making the point that conflict **is a very serious matter.**



- This list of evils reads a great deal like the front page of the daily newspaper.
- How could this be?

- I believe there are two reasons why James included murder as a sin that was possible among those to whom he wrote.

- First,

we must reluctantly admit  
that there is no sin  
of which the saint is  
incapable.

- We need only look at  
people in the Bible  
to see this.

- **Moses** took the life of an Egyptian, because he was mistreating a Hebrew (**Exodus 2:11-12**).
- **David** committed adultery and attempted to cover it up by murdering Bathsheba's husband, Uriah (**2 Samuel 11:14-25**).
- If we think that we are incapable of any other sin, **we deceive ourselves.**

- A former elder in a Kansas City, Missouri, church was sentenced to life in prison for killing his wife, who was an associate pastor.
- They had been married for 18 months.

- [Mary Carol Winkler](#)  
was convicted of  
voluntary manslaughter  
in the 2006 shooting of her husband,  
Matthew Winkler,
- Pulpit minister at the  
Fourth Street Church of Christ  
in Selmer, Tennessee.
- Mary Winkler's murder trial  
was the subject of the  
2011 TV film  
The Pastor's Wife.

- **Second**,  
James is speaking  
**about the path of sin,**  
and where it inevitably leads.

- **In Proverbs 1**,  
the “two paths” are described:

- (1) **The path of folly,**  
which leads to death  
(Proverbs 1:8-12, 16-19, 32)

- (2) **The path of wisdom,**  
which leads to life  
(Proverbs 1:20-23, 33).

- What was our Lord's teaching regarding murder?

- (**Matthew 5:21-22** NET)

**21** *“You have heard that it was said to an older generation, ‘Do not murder,’ and ‘whoever murders will be subjected to judgment.’*

**22** *But I say to you that anyone who is angry with a brother will be subjected to judgment.*



- In this text,  
Jesus takes up  
the teaching of the Law  
concerning the sin of  
murder.
- The Jewish Rabbi  
dealt with this law  
legalistically.
- They assumed that  
when the law forbade murder,  
that was as far as it went.

- Jesus put the matter **of murder** into a very different light.
  - To Him, murder is **not only a terrible sin,**
    - It is the fruit of **unholy anger.**

- The reason why Christians have quarrels and conflicts is because they have allowed their fleshly desires to dominate their lives.

- **The church at Corinth**  
is a tragic illustration  
**of the self-seeking**  
James warns us about.
- They had divisions among them,
  - Some Christians were  
**taking other Christians to court**  
(1:10-17; 6:1-11).
    - **1 Corinthians 6:2**  
“are you not competent  
to settle trivial suits?”

- Pleasure seeking dominated the lives of many of the saints.
- One man was married to *his father's wife* (1 Corinthians 5:1).
- Others were warned to *“Flee sexual immorality”* (1 Corinthians 6:18).

- **In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

Paul stresses the need  
for

**self-control,**

- For bringing our body  
**into submission,**

rather than allowing it to

**dominate us.**

- If all this were not bad enough,  
**pleasure seeking**  
had corrupted  
the most sacred gathering of all
  - The meeting of the saints  
to remember our Lord's death  
**at the Lord's Table**  
**(1 Corinthians 11:17ff.)**.
  - What were these saints  
**doing?**

- 1Corinthians 11:20

*Now when you come together  
at the same place,  
you are not really eating  
the Lord's Supper.*

11:21 *For when it is time to eat,  
everyone proceeds  
with his own supper.*

*One is hungry  
and another becomes drunk.*

- “Drunk”  
{Intoxicated}

[G-3184]



- Some Corinthians were more concerned with showing off with their spiritual gifts that edifying each other.  
(**1 Corinthians 14**)
  - No wonder James looks upon pleasure seeking with great disdain.

- James states that they do not have what they want because they have not properly prayed for it.  
(James 1:1-3)
- They have sought blessings from everyone but God.
- But even if they had prayed, they would not have obtained what they sought because they were asking wrongly.

- God does not give us what we request simply to satisfy our fleshly lusts.
- He meets all of our true needs, but He does not cater to our every whim

- The pursuit of fleshly lusts is the pursuit of vanity, and in this pursuit, **we always come up short.**
  - God desires for us **to be content** in our circumstances (**Philippians 4:11-13**)
    - And to learn **endurance** (**James 1:2-4**).

- That which we most need is wisdom, not wealth (**James 1:5-8**).
- “so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything.” (**James 1:4**),
  - But this has much more to do with our character than with our earthly possessions.

- The force of temptation is that it dwells **within our hearts.**
  - Temptation is not **an outside enemy.**
  - But one that lives within us **until the day we die.**

- If we ignore the danger within, or think that it has been eradicated, we are in a most precarious position!

- We think that sin will satisfy us.

- It tells us that we are missing something good.

- But instead, it hooks us and drags us to destruction.



- The force of temptation is that it has a life of its own.
  - We've all seen a tree growing out of a concrete sidewalk, where it has split the concrete.
    - It began as a tiny seed, falling into a crack.

- But that seed had life in it, and the power of that life produced a tree that broke up a concrete sidewalk.

- Temptation has that kind of destructive life in it.

- Don't let it take root in your life!

- To overcome temptation,  
recognize its source  
your own sinful desires.
- # 1 Recognize its force  
it dwells in your own heart  
and is a powerfully deceptive emotion  
with a life of its own.
- # 2 Recognize its course  
as it is never stationary.

It moves steadily  
in its course

like a mighty river.

A course that leads to death.

- James mentions **two different destinations:**

- **# 1 Death**  
(James 1:15)

- **# 2 The crown of life**  
(James 1:12).

- **Someone has said,**
- **Watch your thoughts,  
they become words.**
- **Watch your words,  
they become actions.**
- **Watch your actions,  
they become habits.**
- **Watch your habits,  
they become character.**
- **Watch your character,  
as it becomes your destiny.”**

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church  
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride**

**Say**

**“Come”.**

**Revelation 22:17**



