

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

James 4:1-4

Lesson #16

Understanding Social Conflict

06/20/2021

NO JUSTICE NO PEACE

*A common assumption*

If you want social peace  
you need a just society.

*James offers a different perspective.*

Without inner peace  
there will be no social peace or justice.

1

## Understanding social conflict

*James 4*

“<sup>1</sup> What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source **your pleasures** that **wage war in your members**? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask with **wrong motives**, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup> You adulteresses, do you not know that **friendship with the world** is hostility toward God?”

2

“Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. **Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.**”

Martin Luther King Jr.

3

“To change the law and leave the heart unchanged is simply **to drive social injustice underground and add to it - hypocrisy.**”

4

The N.T. addresses social ethics not so much by reforming the world's systems **as by addressing the root spiritual cause, behind the systems.**

*Mark 7:20*

“That which proceeds **out of** the man, that is what defiles the man.”

*John 18:36*

“my kingdom is **not** of this world.”

5

*James 4:1*

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?”

**1. Social conflict may be a symptom of a deeper problem.**

*Social / political conflict*

What should we **fear** and who should we **blame**?



6

“1 . . . Is not the source **your pleasures** (HEDONE) that **wage war in your members**?  
2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.”

**2. “In the end it is always between us and God, not between us and them.”**



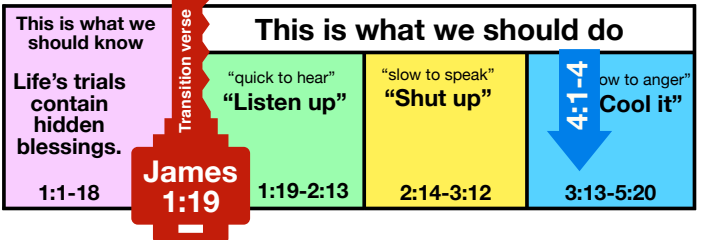
Mother Teresa

7



8

## James Kingdom Living in a Broken World



**3. Inner stress can lead to spiritual insight** if we are quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

9

**Fear -**  
“We want protection.”

**Anxiety**  
is a negative audit of the future.  
“Something awful might happen.”



**Blame -**  
“We want correction.”

**Anger**  
is a negative audit of the past.  
“Something awful has happened.”

These can be signs and symptoms of spiritual issues that need addressing and can lead us to reexamine our:  
**Perspectives - Goals - Priorities**  
which in turn can bring about **real change from the inside out.**

10



**What does this mean for many Christians?**

**PROSPERITY**  
(no lack of goods)

**PROTECTION**  
(no fear of harm)

**POWER**  
(no blocking of influence)

11



Matthew 4

"And the tempter came and said to Him, "You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

(prosperity?)

5 Then the devil took Him into the temple, and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning you'; and 'On the hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

(protection?)

8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."

(power?)

12

**Questions**  
**Christians should**  
**ask about goals**  
**and faith.**



- **Christian nationalism** - Should we view America as an extension of God's kingdom?

- **American political philosophy** - Have we misplaced our faith, hope, & love?



- **Alien status** - Are we fighting our alien status in American culture?

- **The real issue** - Is it spiritual or political?

13

"2 . . . You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with **wrong motives**, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures."

#### 4. The prayer of faith can be canceled by selfish motives.

- **Where do we go for help?** We too often place our faith, hope, and love, in this world.

- God will not save our plans or manipulate our circumstances **when we place our faith, hope, and love in this world's agenda?**

14

"4 You adulteresses, do you not know that **friendship with the world** is hostility toward God?"

James 3

"13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him **show by his good behavior** his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

**Worldly Wisdom**

**Godly Wisdom**

"14 But if you have bitter **jealousy and selfish ambition** in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where **jealousy and selfish ambition** exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then **peaceable**, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in **peace** by those who **make peace**."

15

### How we cultivate "Friendship with the world"

1. Refuse to see ourselves as "**aliens**" in it.
2. Expect God to **bless us** with it.
3. Seek **painkillers** through it.
4. Demand **justice** from it.
5. Blame **others** for it.
6. Become a **part** of it.



16

"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Jeremiah 2:13



17

Satan doesn't want to take away  
our faith, hope, and love.

He just  
wants to  
control the

**subject  
& object**  
of our faith,  
hope and love.



18

Satan doesn't mind legislative  
reform and civil order

If it leaves in-  
tact a hard  
heart of

**fear,  
pride,  
self pity, &  
selfishness.**



19

“The Negro needs the white  
man to **free him from his  
fears**. The white man needs  
the Negro to **free him  
from his guilt**.”

**Both need the  
Way of the  
Cross**

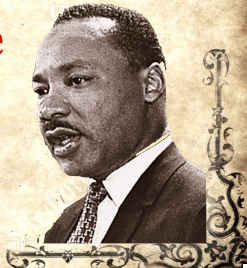
Martin Luther King, Jr.



20

“Peace is not merely a  
distant goal that we seek  
**but a means by  
which we arrive  
at that goal.**”

Martin Luther King, Jr.



21