

“IF” Statements of the Bible X Epistle of James #2

Fred Coulter—December 25, 2010

Let’s go to the Epistle of James and we’re going to go ahead and continue with **IF** statements, **IF** statements in James. Now we covered all the way through James 2. I want to mention that here is *The Seven General Epistles* book. Now this is a study book for the seven General Epistles. I have said in the past that there were 79 sermons to go with it, but unfortunately that’s incorrect, because I included all the Gospel of John when I said that. There are well over 40 and we have them all on CDs now. I just asked Jim because he’s been getting everything, between Jonathan and Jim, getting everything converted over to CDs. If you don’t have this book, we have plenty, you can write in for it. We’ll send it to you with the CDs. This is a detailed, verse-by-verse study. If you’ve never gone through it that way, that’ll help you a lot.

Now also when I finally got serious about translating, I started with James, then 1st, 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, then Jude. So that’s how I started translating. That was back in 1991 or 1992. What I did, I did special study papers, you can put notes in it, make lots of notes, whatever you want. We go through it in great detail.

The most **IFs** in the Epistle of James are found in the second chapter. Let’s come over here to James 3, because here are quite a few things that are good for us to know. Now I’m going to cover a good number of verses, but I’m not going to cover every verse that is here. Needless to say, the theme of James is *faith*. That’s what it talks about in the second chapter. ‘Faith without works is dead,’ because if you have faith, you will have works.

If you claim you have faith, but no works, your faith is no better than even the demons believing that there is God. So James makes that very clear. Now also, when we come to James 3, we find some very interesting things. So when we start out, we have some instruction and warning to those who would be teachers. So you want to be a teacher, you want to be a minister? Fine, as long as you do it God’s way. That won’t be a problem.

James 3:1: “My brethren, do not many of you become teachers... [We don’t need lots and lots of teachers. In order to be a teacher then one has to know the Scripture. One has to understand what they are doing. Then you go back in 1-Tim. and you have the qualifications for an elder, which would be about the same for a teacher, and that you

are to teach the Word of God, not the ideas of men. Look at where the world is today with all the ideas of men. Everyone thinks they’re right.

Here today we’re having services on what the world calls Christmas Day. On this day, everyone thinks it’s good. You look at it. They wrap it around the family. Isn’t that good? It’s nice to have family affairs—right? *That’s good!* Is it good to give a gift? *Yes, it is!* Is it good to be with people you love? *Yes, it is!* What about all the things that aren’t good? *Nearly everything associated with Christmas is a lie*, has nothing to do with Jesus’ birth. The tree has to do with the false messiah out of Babylon, Tammuz and goes back to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The point was brought up that with all of the feasting and drinking and carousing and all of that, and they say they’re doing it to God. But what about those who do things which they should do to God? *Such as pray!* What about some of the Christmas carols? Some of them are really nice and sound nice. What about those?

Let’s look at something that I think really helps explain it. People love to talk about God, as long as God doesn’t tell them what to do. So here’s what people do. They have nice, wonderful church services, huge choirs. They get the best singers to do the solos and they sing hymns to God. And some of them do honor God, but do they really honor God?

Isaiah 29:13: “And the LORD said, ‘Because this people draw near *Me* with their mouth, and with their lips honor *Me*, but their worship of *Me* is made up of the traditions of men learned by rote, and their fear toward *Me* is *taught* by the commandments of men.’” So that’s a good explanation of what Christmas is. Jesus was never born at that time. They do a lot of things that are good, but if you would tell them, ‘God says this is an abomination.’ Now that would be like hitting them right smack in the face with a full fist, because after all it’s for your children. After all it’s for your family. After all, everybody does it—right? How many are really thinking of God on Christmas?

Now what is their perception of Jesus at Christmas? *A little baby*, inoffensive, sweet, nice lovely, in a manger, with three wise men. We’re not told how many were there. Actually they came to the house, they didn’t come to the manger as you find in Matt. 3. Because of that, whenever you do

something that you think is right—and what does the Proverb say? ‘There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.’ What did Jesus about the way? *Broad is the way and wide is the gate that leads to destruction!* So people are then blinded because they don’t do what God says.

Verse 14: “Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do again a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise ones shall perish... [Do we have trouble in Washington, D.C., and the churches in the world? *Yes!*] ...and the wisdom of their intelligent ones shall vanish.” That’s what happens.

Let’s see where he said something very similar to what we just read there in Isa. 29. Here is what happens, and here’s what God told Isaiah to do, Isaiah 6:9: “And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people, “You hear indeed, but do not understand; and you see indeed, but do not perceive.” Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and return, and be healed”’ (vs 9-10). Now that’s quite a statement—isn’t it?

You mean God doesn’t want to convert everybody at this time? *That’s correct!* There are the firstfruits. So when they come and worship God with their traditions and their ways and their thoughts, though they take many things that are good, the whole foundation is based upon a lie. Santa Claus doesn’t live at the North Pole. He doesn’t come to every house to bring gifts for children. He cannot come down every chimney, because most of them are too skinny. Reindeer don’t fly. Elves don’t work for Santa. The Christmas tree doesn’t represent Christ.

But what do they do, they put all the gifts under the Christmas tree—right? Wrap them really nice and have a beautiful Christmas tree. But what does that really symbolize? *The tree of the knowledge of good and evil!* I saw a lighted Christmas tree that was just the tubular lights and it was just like a serpent and then up at the top is a star. Of course, that symbolizes Satan. So here you have the true symbolism. This is to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and you’re celebrating the fall of Adam and Eve. You’re not worshipping God. And all the gifts that are under here really are equivalent to the benefits that Satan gives from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They open their gifts today and a week from Monday, they will start opening their bills.

They don’t think of Jesus as He really is. They don’t think of Him as a returning, conquering

warrior. They don’t think of Him as all-powerful to shake the heavens and earth when He returns.

All of those who are ministers out there, and in the coming book, *Lord, What Shall I Do?*—we have a chapter for ministers. What is the responsibility of ministers? Because every minister out there who teaches, ‘Well, it’s good to have Christmas. Oh, that’s lovely. Come to church on Christmas.’ And I think even the Catholics have it, ‘Well, if you come to church on Christmas and Easter, well, then, you’ve met the minimum.’ Isn’t that about right? You do that, well, you’re doing homage to Satan, Nimrod and then on Easter, that’s to Ishtar, a goddess, not Jesus. *All based on a lie!* ‘Well, where do you get all of that stuff?’ Well, let me just tell you this right now. If you don’t have the book, *The Two Babylons*, what we’ve done on our website, we’ve provided for you, you can download it free. Now you probably have to download it in tranches or sections at a time, but it covers everything and it shows that papal worship is the worship of Nimrod and Semiramis, his wife. Nimrod was a mighty hunter, which led the apostasy after the Flood, and he was in place of God and against God.

So if you’re trying to be a Christian teacher and you don’t know that and you don’t understand the Bible, here’s what James says, James 3:1: “My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that we will receive more severe judgment; because we frequently offend, every one of us. **IF** anyone does not offend in what he says...” (vs 1-2). Of course, we’ve all done that—haven’t we?

- Haven’t we said things we shouldn’t say?
- Haven’t we caused people to get angry at us?
- Haven’t we caused people to be offended?
- Haven’t we been offended by what people say to us or how they look at us or how they treat us?

Yes! “...If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man...” (v 2). We are to become perfect, and if we’re to become perfect that means it’s a *process*.

- overcoming human nature
- overcoming sin
- being converted
- growing in grace and knowledge
- growing in the Spirit of God

When will we be perfect? *At the resurrection!* That’s when we’ll be perfect. As long as we’re in the flesh, we can’t be perfect.

Let’s look at Matthew 5, because this shows the whole goal of what we are to become. You look in the world and they say, ‘If you’re going to be

successful, you've have to have a goal and you have to have a plan.' If you're in business, you have to have a business plan.

- What are you going to do?
- How are you going to do it?
- How are you going to get your customers?
- How are you going to sell your product, whatever it may be?

If you don't, then you're not going to be successful. Just to give you an example. That's why Ford survived the downturn in 2008. They made preparations in 2006 and they set aside enough money and borrowed enough money ahead of time so they could make the transition. They didn't know it was going to go as low as it did in 2008, but they had a plan on how to structure the company to get rid of all of the waste, to cut the number of cars that they were making, get rid of the Mercury line, and so forth, and they put that into action. They survived and when the bottom fell out. It was very funny at the hearings there. The CEOs of Chrysler, General Motors, and Ford were there. The CEO from Ford didn't need any money. So here is Chrysler begging, 'Oh, yes, yes, yes.' The senator looked down there and said, 'Would you work for one dollar for a year?' *Yes, yes, yes, just give us the money.* Same way with General Motors. Came to the CEO of Ford and he said, 'Would you work for a dollar?' He says, 'Don't have to. We don't need any government money.' Had a plan.

Here is the goal; everybody has to have a goal. This is God's goal for us, Matthew 5:48 **"Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect."** Now you can't get any more perfect than that—right?

So we come from sinfulness and imperfection, then through repentance and baptism, receiving God's Spirit, and growing and overcoming, then we are developing the character of God day-by-day by day through how we live, living God's way, having a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Then we are going on to perfection. When we sin we repent. God forgives us and we go on. God has a plan. His plan is laid out where? *His plan is laid out in the Bible!* He gives the goal; He gives the plan, and here's God plan. We have it right here all in a book, *God's Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days.* Those very things that men with their traditions reject! They are the ones who are teaching. And if you corner them and they admit to you, 'Well, we know Christmas was originally pagan, but we've cleaned it up. We've made it nice. The pope has blessed it.' *Well, Jesus wasn't born then.* 'Well, it

doesn't make any difference when He was born, we're honoring Him then.'

Well, how about you? If you're going to celebrate a birthday, are you going to do it six months before or nine months before? Someone come into your house, nine months before your birthday, and the family's gathered together and you have a birthday cake with the candles on it, and some of them bring you some gifts and you're sitting there. Someone comes into your house and says, 'Oh, is this a birthday party?' *Oh, yes, I'm celebrating my birthday nine months ahead of time.* That won't work.

Like I told Dolores when it came time for our 30th wedding anniversary, this year it'll be 45, I said, 'Hey, next year, why don't we celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary while we're still young and healthy.' Could we celebrate it ahead of time? *No! That's ridiculous!* So likewise here you have it. This is why they are going to receive the sterner judgment.

James 3:2: "...**IF** anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and* is able also to hold in check the whole body.... [He's giving a statement here to which no one can possibly do in the flesh. So he's showing if you think you're perfect, you'd better have another thought.] ...Remember, we put bits into horses' mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies. Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide. In the same way also, the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things...." (vs 2-5).

What's one of the big things on news that you hear all the time, what different people say? The politicians years ago before television could say anything they wanted to anyone and it would hardly be recorded and come back and haunt them. Now a politician says something, like they've been doing with the politicians and Obama and different ones, what they do, they get their statement they made four years ago, they put a clip of television up there and you can see. 'We are not going to raise the taxes on anyone who incomes of \$250,000 or less. I'm for taxing those with \$250,000 and more and especially those who earn a million dollars.' Then when it comes down to doing it, he caves. How many people did he offend with everything that he said there?

Verse 5: "In the same way also, the tongue is a little member... [just one part of the body] ...but it boasts great things. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire.... [We've seen that—haven't we? Down here in California.] ...And the tongue *is* a

fire, a world of unrighteousness. So has the tongue been set among our members—*the one member that defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by Gehenna*” (vs 5-6). So here it is: If one does not offend—but look at how many things are there that we do offend with.

Now what do you do if you’re offended by someone? What should you do? How should you handle it? *Christ gave the instructions* (Matt. 18). Here’s what you’re to do. Are you to get mad at them? Well, maybe you’ll get mad at them at first. Are you to hold a grudge against them? If you hold a grudge against them, what is that going to do to your thought process? *Make it bitter and resentful!* That’s going to affect your body and your health and your thoughts. So here’s what Christ said. He talks about offences.

All the way through its talking about offending, offending one of the little ones, and so forth. Matthew 18:15: “So then, **IF** your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between you and him alone...” *That’s how to do it!* Don’t go talk to someone else and say, ‘Did you know...?’ Did you hear...?’ Or as some people have been known to do—run to the minister and say, ‘Did you know this person did this to me? *Really!* And then he comes storming out on a visit or blasts them from the pulpit. *No! What Jesus says is you go to the person, you and him alone!*

You might start out and say, ‘Hey, I think we have something we need to discuss here. Maybe I mistook what you said, but you caused me a great deal of distress the other day, and so I think we need to get it ironed out.’ So then the rest of v 15: “...**IF** he is willing to hear you, you gained your brother.”

Now 95-plus percent of all difficulties can be solved if you do this, because you’re doing it God’s way. When we pray, Jesus said that you have to forgive those who sin against you. So if you don’t forgive them and if you hold anger and resentment and bitterness in your mind and you don’t repent of it and then you see the person and you—I know how that is. I’ve gone through that. I’ve experienced what it is to do it and what it is to experience it. So we need to do it God’s way.

What happens if he won’t listen? Then here’s what you do, v 16: “But **IF** he will not listen, take with you one or two others, so that in *the* mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.... [Now that will take care of 99.some percent, because they know that if it’s not handled at those two levels, what happens next?] ...And **IF** he fails to listen to them, tell it to the Church” (vs 16-17).

Ministers come along and say, ‘Well, you’re to tell the ministry.’ *No!* The only thing a minister can do is, if you’re going to tell it to the Church, what is the Church? *The collective body of those in attendance*—correct? Now this is a pretty serious offense. You want peace. So the only thing a minister should do is say, ‘Okay, since you have to tell it to the Church, I’ll set a time for when there will be a meeting and when the Church gets together, then we can work it out.’ Now no one wants to have it blasted in public—right? No one wants to go before the whole Church—right? So Jesus gave the right way to do it.

But if it comes to that, now let’s read what He says here: “...But **IF**... [There’s one of those *IF*s. We’re covering some *IF*s—all the way through here.] ...**IF** he also fails to listen to the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the tax collector” (v 17). Then what you do, you make a Godly decision.

What if it had to do with a piece of machinery that someone borrowed from you? They brought it back broken. What does the Bible say with goods that breakdown if you borrow them? *The one who broke it down makes it good!* But if you are with the machinery and with him, say it’s a lawn mower or a motor, and it breaks down while you’re with it, he doesn’t have to make it good, because you hired it or you loaned it, and you were there present with it. So then that would be the decision that would be made. Now what happens if someone owes you a lot of money and they’re not paying it? You have several choices you can do. We’ll see that right here in just a minute.

“...But **IF** he also fails to listen to the church, let him to be to you as the heathen and the tax collector.... [So he is disfellowshipped. That’s the highest authority of dealing with problems that the Church has.] (Then He gives something very important here): “Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on the earth will have already been bound in heaven...” (vs 17-18).

Now why is it put in that way? Because whatever decision is made must be based on the Word of God, which has already been what? *Decided in heaven!* You’re not going to decide something different than what God would have you do. “...and whatever you shall loose on the earth will have already been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you on earth shall agree concerning any matter that they wish to request, it shall be done for them by My Father, Who *is* in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there, I am in *the* midst of them” (vs 18-20).

Now this is how you do things without causing offense. And if there is an offense, this is how you handle it. Always remember this: Jesus said, 'Let your yes be *yes* and your no be *no*.' I often get a kick out of people who you're talking to them and they say *no* or they say *yes*. You think, 'What do they really mean? Is it really *no* or is it really *yes*?'

Verse 21: "Then Peter came to Him *and* said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me... [We're talking about offending—right?] ...and I forgive him? Until seven times?' [That's a lot. Seven times is a lot—right? Now what if someone made the same mistake seven times in a day? Well, Garemo here, he runs a business where they do the plating of metal and the employee better learn to do it the way the instructions are.] ...Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven' (vs 21-22).

Now in the case of employment where he really doesn't get it and he doesn't understand it, then maybe he better go get another job or maybe he needs to work someplace else. Or maybe the instruction wasn't good enough to begin with. So there are many different things you could consider in it. Seventy times seven; God desires mercy and not sacrifice.

Now then He says here concerning a debtor. I'll just summarize it, we won't read all the verses. The king brought a man in who owed him 10,000 talents, that would be like \$10-million in gold today or more. He didn't have anything to pay for it. The king says, 'Sell him and his children to make good on the payment.' And he fell down, worshiped the king and he said, 'I don't have anything to pay for it, but I will pay you.' So the king had compassion on him, forgave him. He said, 'Don't worry about what you owe me.'

Now you can also do that if someone owes you a sum of money and it's a difficult thing for him to pay back, and it's a difficult thing for you to live with him not paying it back, because you're holding something against him. I remember one man who was in a predicament like that with someone in church and he came to church one Sabbath and he resolved in his mind, 'I'm going to follow Matt. 18 and I'm going to forgive the man the debt. I'm just going to say I'm going to forgive you. I know it's difficult; therefore, you owe me nothing.' Well, what happened, his business prospered and he got back twice of what he forgave the man. So that shows that if you do it God's way, then you're going to do well.

But the servant that was forgiven went out and got one of his servants who owed him a hundred silver coins, choked him and said, 'Pay me what you

owe.' He said, 'I'll pay you all.' He didn't do it. He sold him, put him in prison. Then the other ones came and told the king what had happened, didn't forgive him, put him in prison. Now, let's notice what happened here.

Verse 32: "Then his lord called him *and* said to him, 'You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him.... [This is why James is writing what he's saying there in the third chapter]: ...Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, **IF** each *of* you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart" (vs 32-35). You don't say, (grudgingly) 'Well, all right! I'll forgive you.' How's that for compassion? *No, that's not compassion.*

There are some things here in James 3:5 that we're going to cover which will help us here: "In the same way also, the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire; and the tongue *is* a fire, a world of unrighteousness. So has the tongue been set among our members—the *one member that* defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by Gehenna" (vs 5-6).

Then it talks about taming all the birds, making them do what should be done, but yet no one can tame the tongue. Verse 8: "But the tongue no human being is able to tame; *it is* an unrestrainable evil... [Now think of this next time you watch riots. They're out there yelling, screaming, accusing, cursing. Yeah, they break down buildings, break windows, set cars on fire, and everything like that.] ...*it is* an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison.... [Now notice what he says. God wants us to be single-minded, and the way that we work for perfection is that single-mindedness. Now notice what James writes here concerning it, because we're leading up to a big **IF** in v 14.] ...With it... [the tongue] ...we bless God *the* Father, and with it we ourselves curse people who are made in *the* likeness of God" (vs 8-9).

Now maybe they are doing some things wrong. Maybe they're doing some things you don't like. Like the man recently got arrested because he shot his television, because he didn't like—shouting, yelling, and screaming in the house, jumping up and down. He went and got his gun out of the closet. His wife said, 'What are you doing?' Bang! He shoots the television! Did he stop anything? Did he change anything? *No!* I've shouted at the television and afterwards I sit back and I think, 'Now that was

dumb! Did you really change anything?’ They couldn’t hear you anyway. What did you waste all of that energy on them for?

“From the same mouth comes out blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things out not to be so!” (v 10). So we need to learn to bridle the tongue, especially if we’re going to be teaching, and especially if we are going to be counseling. Counseling should be just between you and the individual. Now if you’re an elder and you’re counseling people, you don’t even tell your wife. You understand that? *Because if you tell someone, word is going to get out!* Why should a private counseling thing get out in public? *Should not!*

Verse 11: “Does a fountain pour out of the same opening sweet *water* and bitter *water*? My brethren, can a fig tree produce olives, or a vine produce figs? In the same way, no fountain can produce salt water and fresh *water*. Who is wise and understanding among you?...” (vs 11-13). We all like to think ourselves as wise and understanding. We all like to think of ourselves as being able to restrain ourselves and not get carried away with emotions and anger and things like this. But if you do, get over it! Ask yourself:

- Is it worth it?
- What have I accomplished?
- Did it really change the person?

I’ve done that; I’ve gotten mad and had to go back and repair the damage.

“...Let him demonstrate his works through good conduct in *the* meekness of wisdom. But **IF**... [Here’s what it leads to. But **IF**, here’s the big **IF** and tie in that Matt. 18:] ...But **IF** you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart... [carnality] ...do not boast and lie against the Truth. This wisdom... [or *this behavior*] ...does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual and demonic; because where bitter envying and selfish ambition are, there is dissension and every evil thing.... [How many churches has this happened in? *Yes!* We see it happening even within one of the large Churches of God: fighting, warring, quarreling.] ...But the wisdom from above is first pure... [You’re going to look at it God’s way.] ...then peaceful... [You don’t want to have anger and hostility. You work out it peaceful.] ...gentle... [even though you may want to retaliate] ...reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and without hypocrisy. Now *the* fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace” (vs 13-18).

So this really gives us a tremendous lesson because here in James three there are only two **IFs**—v 2 and v 14, but it’s all tied together. So this helps us to be able to use this as a gauge on how

with God’s Spirit we can change our behavior. We can work at being perfect. Not to say, ‘Okay, I’m going to be perfect.’ No, that’s not how to do it. You start out your relationship with God—prayer, study. Then you begin to exercise self-control in your thought, self-control in your behavior, and then be able to bridle your tongue, bridle your mind. Because if you bridle your mind, you’ll bridle your tongue and then you behave in a Godly way.

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Let’s come to James 4 and here there are only three **IFs**, but there are some other important lessons for us to learn in chapter four. So let’s go through chapter four and then we will learn the lessons, because it’s all based on this.

James 4:1: “*What is* the cause of quarrels and fightings among you?...” You can apply this to

- individuals
- families
- groups
- communities
- political parties
- even churches

Here it is right here: “...*Is it* not mainly from your own lusts *that are* warring within your members?” Fighting between you. Now also your own lusts that are warring within your own members. In other words, your own lusts within you is carrying you away to do these things. Have you ever had a really good argument where you came away feeling really good and happy and cheerful and joyful? *No!* You come away in a huff! You come away angry! You come away bitter! You come away ready to get that person that you had it with.

Now here’s describing the world. So he’s talking also to unconverted Jews who were attending synagogue, because in the synagogue, since it was written to the twelve tribes of Israel and it talks about the synagogue, but there is no Gentile circumcision, uncircumcision problem mentioned in James. Which means it was written very early. So there were unconverted Jews in the synagogue, converted Jews in the synagogue.

Now he’s talking to the unconverted here. “You lust, and have not; you kill, and are jealous... [Now, no converted person’s going to be killing—right?] ...and are not able to obtain; you fight and quarrel, but still you do not have, because you do not ask. *Then* you ask, and you do not receive, because you ask with evil motives, that you may consume it on your own lusts.” (vs 2-3). And your own lusts can be pride and vanity and jealousy and greed and self-exaltation—all the works of the flesh.

“*You adulterers and adulteresses... [That’s not very friendly. He’s speaking spiritually here, because they’re getting involved with the world.] ...don’t you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?... [In other words, carnal-mindedness. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,’ (Rom. 8:7)—right? Basic Scripture we all need to understand.] ...Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (v 4).*

That is to put fellowship with the world and people with the world, instead of fellowship with God and fellowship with the brethren of God. And you’re out there in the world doing exactly as the world, all of the things that the world is doing. Lying, cheating, stealing, manipulating, and things like that. Now knowing that the Jews, and he was writing this mainly to Jews, that there are a lot of them out there in the business world. There are some very honest, there are some very dishonest, just like with any other people. So he’s telling them, ‘Look, you get out there and do this, you’re an enemy of God.

“Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain... [Of course, the Scripture never says anything in vain. *Everything the Scripture says is true.*] ...‘The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy’?” (v 5). We see something someone has, we want it, we’ll take it, we’ll scheme to get it. Now, if you don’t believe that is true, and if you have CNBC watch some of their specials. Now they have a special called American Greed. Boy, it shows how people go after land and buildings and companies and they go after people’s goods. They especially go after their money in ponzi schemes. There are thousands of ponzi schemes.

Then they had one special I watched because I was kind of intrigued with it. Here was a man who was the world’s best jewel thief and he specialized on stealing from the really wealthy and rich and famous people. He even stole jewels from Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe. He knew how to get into these building and steal it. The police knew his MO (modus operandi), but they couldn’t catch him.

So when they finally caught him, they said, ‘All right, we will make you a deal. We will give you a light sentence if you tell us how you did this.’ He would even climb buildings, fourteen stories, get in a window. And people just leave all their things there. On one heist he took out over \$200-thousand in jewelry. He was so given to his thievery that he couldn’t stop, because he says, ‘People are so stupid and I’ll take it from them.’ Perfect example of it here.

“...‘The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy’?” (v 5). Now you can overcome it. How do you overcome it?

- choose God’s way
- choose peace
- choose control of the tongue and the mind

“But He gives greater grace... [you repent] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble’” (v 6). Here’s the process right here. A lot of these things are inspired by Satan the devil, who is the *god of this world*, is the spirit power out there inspiring people and stirring up their carnality and lust to do these things. He is the one who is causing these things.

Ephesians 2:1: “Now you were dead in trespasses and sins.... [That’s what we are, the walking dead when we’re living in sin, because the ‘wages of sin is death.’ Now God is merciful. He doesn’t strike us dead when we sin, because He wants us to learn the lessons of it and to repent of it.] (notice how people are in the world): ...in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [According to the society, the way the world does everything.] ...according to the prince of the power of the air...” (vs 1-2). That power from Satan that emanates from him to cause people to sin.

Remember what it says there concerning Judas and betraying Christ—what did it say? ‘And the devil having already put into his heart to betray Him.’ So the devil is just like a big broadcasting machine out there. Now he’s got lots of help. Boy, he’s got television, he’s got the Internet, he’s got iPhones and iPads, BlackBerrys, and all of these things, all of them there, to help with the lust.

“...prince of the power of the air, the spirit... [When you do it, you partake of the spirit of Satan the devil.] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience.... [That’s why God is not saving the world now, because how many are going to repent? What did Jesus say? *Many are called, but few are chosen!* Why are few chosen? *Because God doesn’t chose you unless you repent!* The invitation goes out, but do you want to respond.] ...Among whom also we all once... [not now] ...once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath, even as the rest of the world” (vs 2-3).*

Now notice how to resist the world, how to resist Satan, James 4:7: “Therefore, submit yourselves to God....” That means

- God’s laws
- God’s commandments
- God’s way

- God's Word

Submit yourself to God! "...Resist the devil... [You fight against him.] ...and he will flee from you" (v 7).

Now have you ever gone along, you're having a good day, you're having good thoughts, and then all of sudden DING! something comes into your mind that's really evil. What do you do with that? Where did that come from? *That comes from Satan the prince of the power of the air!* What do you do with it? We'll see what we do with it. You have to do something with it. You just can't let that be in your mind and continue in your mind. You have to get it out of your mind. You have to repent of it. Now just like we said, God has the goal to be perfect—correct? *Yes!* God has the plan on how to overcome. Here's part of it: Draw near to God and resist the devil. But here is what you do, because our warfare is with Satan.

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in the flesh... [though we're still fleshly beings] ...we do not war according to the flesh." We don't use the devices of human nature to combat the wickedness of human nature. Can you overcome human nature with human nature? *No!* You may adjust it a little bit, but you don't get rid of the lust. Getting rid of the lust comes with the Spirit of God.

"For although we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal..." (vs 3-4). We use prayer. We use forgiveness. We use, with the Spirit of God, discipline of the mind and cleansing of the mind, the washing of the water of the Word. Now I'm going to give a sermon on that probably next week on what is it *the washing of the water of the Word*, and how then we can have our minds cleansed. Now that happens to all of us—doesn't it? We go along and all of a sudden, BANG! here's this thought in our mind, out of nowhere. All right, here's what we do.

"Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God... [that's what sin does] ...and bringing into captivity... [You control your thoughts. You control your mind.] ...bringing into captivity every thought... [That's how you control it. Just like we found there in James 3 of what the tongue does and the bitterness and the envy and the anger. You grab hold of that thought and take it down. Bring it into the captivity]: ...into the obedience of Christ" (v 5). That's what it says. **"...bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ."** So, that's how we control our minds. This is very important, because if you don't do it, then we'll see

a little later the biggest **IF** right here in chapter four we're about ready to cover.

Verse 6: "And having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled." Now how do you do that? You say, 'Oh, God, forgive me for that thought.' You grab hold of it and cast it out. You grab hold of it and ask God to help you get rid of it and not let it come in. Now Satan may be there with the missiles of trying to get evil thoughts into your head. They're out there. That's how you do it. "...having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled." That's how you purify your hearts.

Now notice what else he says, James 4:8: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you... [Same thing that He's told us. 'If you return to Me, I'll return to you.'] ...Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded!" Because what happens? God's Spirit is in you and now you're giving space to these evil thoughts. What does that make you? *Double-minded!* You have a double standard in your mind, when we need to have the focus of the one thing that we're going to be doing. *Double-minded!*

Verse 9: "Be grieved and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into grieving, and *your* joy into mourning. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.... [That's so that you get the control of your mind. That's why it's so important.] ...Brethren, do not talk against one another. The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the* law... [Because God says you're not to do it.] ...But **IF** you judge *the* law..." (vs 9-11).

This becomes a tremendous important thing to grasp. Do people judge the law of God all the time? *Oh, yes!* That's why they sin. They say, 'Oh, well, I know adultery's wrong, but hey, this is so much fun.' Until you go to the doctor and find out you have an STD. Or you're stealing and cheating until you get caught. Now what are you going to do? When people know that sin is sin and go out and do the opposite of what God says, they're judging the law by saying, *God, I don't care about your law.*

"...But **IF** you judge *the* law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge.... [In other words, who are you judging? *You're judging God—* isn't that correct? You're saying, 'God, I don't want to do this law, this law is no good. This one cramps my style.' You are a judge.] ...*But* there is *only* one Lawgiver, Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another?" (vs 11-12). That is from this point of view: We're to

know people by their fruits, but we are not to judge what is in their minds, because we don't know.

This is why we have the book of Job. As I mentioned last week, should read it all. Let's look at the conclusion of the book of Job. After everything that that Job went through—and you see, the whole heart and core of the book of Job was this: ***Job did in the letter of the law everything that God commanded and then he thought he was good himself, as good as God—better than God, equal with God.*** So who was he judging? *He was judging God!* So he said, 'My righteousness is more than God's.' He said, 'I want God to talk to me. I'll tell Him a thing or two.' Well, God talked to him.

Now Job 40:1: "And the LORD answered Job and said, 'Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*? He who reproves God, let him answer it.' And Job answered the LORD and said, 'Behold, I am vile!...' [No one's going to talk back to God and judge Him.] ...What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further'.... [notice how God handled it; what He told Job, because Job was judging the law and judging God]: ...And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?'" (vs 1-8).

So then He challenged him: 'Now if you think you're good as Me, if you think you're better than Me, why don't you try this?' Verse 9: "And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?'.... [So here's a challenge for you, Job.] ...Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty.... ['Let's see you make yourself like God,' that's virtually what He was saying. Because if you say your righteousness is more than God's, then you ought to be a God—right?] ...Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you'" (vs 9-14).

In other words, then you would be God, if you could do that and you could save yourself. No man can save himself. Only God can save a human being. So when a man comes along and makes himself equal to God, what is he saying? *He's judging God. He's judging the laws of God!* That's really the tremendous important thing back in James 4.

Let's go back there and finish off chapter four and there are only two in chapter five, so we'll be able to finish the ***IF*** clauses in James today.

James 4:11: "...But ***IF*** you judge *the* law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge. *But* there is *only* one Lawgiver... [***IF*** you're judging the law, you're saying that you know better than God.] ...*But* there is *only* one Lawgiver, Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another? Now listen, those of you who say, 'Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and we will conduct business and make a profit.' You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears" (vs 11-14).

You know, during this Christmas week they've been running on the Animal Planet channel specials on the earth. I saw it the other night and they were showing how there are massive grasslands all across the earth in southern Russia and in Africa and in the United States and elsewhere. They have these great grasslands. What they did, they showed—and it reminded me of what it says there in Isaiah, that 'all flesh is grass, like the flower in the field.'

They ran real fast sequence to show grass growing, sprouting out, and grass has a little flower and then it generates the seed. Then it's over with. I thought, boy—isn't that something? And running it so fast, it made me think of how short life is, really short. Jim and I are getting up there in years. He's ahead of me and Buddy's behind him. You can look back and you can see that.

So remember how they have run some pictures of people. They start them out as a baby and show them growing up, maturing, getting married, having family, having children, getting older and grayer and more wrinkled and more humped, and everything. That how quick and fleeting that life is, just like it says here, just like a vapor that appears for a little while. When you compare that to all eternity, what is the life of a man? Like Solomon said, 'What if you lived a thousand years twice told and you die?' You're dead! What is it? Here's how we need to live our lives.

Verse 15: "Instead, you *ought* to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live, and we will do this or that.' But now you boast in your own arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, ***IF*** anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin" (vs 15-17).

James 5:14: "Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save

the sick one, and the Lord will raise him up; and **IF** he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (vs 14-15).

Now sometimes there is not a sin that you have committed. Maybe someone came along and coughed in your face and you got the flu. You still need to be healed. You haven’t sinned. Someone else sinned against you. I know that’s happened. That’s happened to me, it’s happened to all of us.

Now v 16 is another thing, too: “Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. *The* supplication of a righteous man prevails much, being effective.”

Verse 19: “Brethren, **IF** anyone among you strays from the Truth, and someone brings him back, Let him know that he who brings back a sinner from *the* error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins” (vs 19-20).

So this also shows another responsibility that **IF** we see someone doing something that isn’t right, we go talk to them. We don’t go up to them and say, ‘Hey! Don’t you know you’re doing wrong?’ *No!* you go up to them and say, ‘You know, maybe here’s something you need to think about. Maybe you’re doing something that isn’t right. Have you ever considered?’ Now that’s the way to entreat them. We’re to entreat them, rather than come up and lower the axe on them and just drop the boom on them. You’ve saved the sinner from error.

There are the **IF** clauses in the book of James. Now if you would like to get *The Seven General Epistles* book, well, by all means write for it. We have all the sermons for the whole general epistle book on four CDs. We do have them ready. So that would be a very good study program for you.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 29:13-14
- 2) Isaiah 6:9-10
- 3) James 3:1-2
- 4) Matthew 5:48
- 5) James 3:2-6
- 6) Matthew 18:15-22, 32-35
- 7) James 3:5-6, 8-18
- 8) James 4:1-6
- 9) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 10) James 4:7
- 11) 2-Corinthians 10:3-6
- 12) James 4:8-12
- 13) Job 40:1-14
- 14) James 4:11-17
- 15) James 5:14-16, 19-20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 3
- Matthew 18:23-31
- Romans 8:7

Also referenced:

Sermon Series/Booklet: *The Seven General Epistles*

Books:

- *Lord, What Should I Do?* (coming soon)
- *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop
- *God’s Plan for Mankind Revealed by His Sabbath and Holy Days* by Fred Coulter

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