

LEAVING GOD OUT

TEXT: JAMES 4:11-17

Introduction:

1. James 4 deals with the problem of worldliness (4:4), and the various ways it manifests itself.
2. It is such a serious problem that James says in verse 4, "the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" and "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
3. Sadly, most churches today are very worldly. Worldliness is living life without God.
4. Tonight we will pick up at verse 11, and a careful reading of our text shows that James is still dealing with the subject of worldliness.
5. James asks in verse 1, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" These "wars and fightings" among Christians are expressed through backbiting -- speaking evil words (4:11).
6. We saw in verses 5 and 6 and 10, that worldliness expresses itself in pride. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (4:6b).
7. In his very helpful commentary on the epistle of James, Frank Gaebelin says this, "What is pride? It is the sin that, arrogating to self the credit belonging to God alone, cheats Him of the honor due His name. In wicked self-sufficiency, it by-passes the Sovereign of heaven and earth and presumes to act in wilful independence. It is the very spirit of secularism, the leading characteristic of this God-forgetting age in which we live" (*Faith That Lives*).
8. Frank Gaebelin referred to "the spirit of secularism." He wrote that over 50 years ago. And that spirit is far worse now.
9. "Secularism" has been defined as the view that religion and religious considerations should be ignored or excluded or rejected.
10. And while secularists and humanists want to exclude all religion from public life, they are particularly hostile to Biblical Christianity. Secularism is basically anti-Christian and anti-Bible.
11. Living here in the wicked, godless city of New York, we are very familiar with secularism. Recently, Mayor Bloomberg has evicted 68 churches from of the NYC public schools.
12. Just this past year, Mayor Bloomberg spent millions of dollars to make so-called "gay marriage" legal in New York State.
13. But here in his epistle James is not referring to the ungodly humanists and pagans and atheists. Notice he uses the term, "brethren" (4:11).

14. James is speaking to Christians. "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" (4:1).
15. Again I will quote Frank Gaebelin, "Whenever we yield to the desire to live our own lives in our own way, forgetting that we are not our own but Christ's, bought with the price of His precious blood; whenever we make decisions in our own wisdom apart from a prayerful seeking of the will of God; whenever we glorify self and self-achievement, ignoring the fact that all we are and have is from the Lord; then we are guilty of pride."
16. The essence of worldliness is the idea that we can live our own lives in our own way, and forgetting all about God. Psalm 9:17 says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
17. Secularism means belief in God is not necessary, not important, not relevant. It means leaving God out, and James makes it clear that even Christians can be guilty of this terrible sin.

I. LEAVING GOD OUT OF OUR WORDS

1. We know that the ungodly leave God out of their speech.
2. Psalm 10:4 says the wicked man "will not seek after God," and "God is not in all his thoughts."
3. God is not in his thoughts, and so the wicked man's foolish remarks are thoughtless. Just recently, a sportswriter named Jason Whitlock made some vulgar and foolish remark about the basketball player Jeremy Lin.
4. We are not very surprised when wicked sinners say evil things, but James says in verse 11, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren."
5. James has already referred to problems with the tongue several times (cf. 1:26; 3:1-18).
6. James says, "He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law" (4:11).
7. James is not referring here to the law of Moses, but to "the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).
8. In James 1:25 it is called "the perfect law of liberty," and in 2:8, "the royal law." James says in 2:8, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."
9. If we are guilty of speaking evil of our brother, than we do not love him as ourselves, and we "art not a doer of the law" (4:11).
10. "Thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge" (4:11b). In other words, James says we are placing ourselves above the law, in a position of a judge.

11. But James says, "There is one lawgiver" (4:12), i.e., God Almighty.
12. This is the sin of leaving God out! Worldlings do this all the time, but James is reminding us that Christians can be guilty of this also.
13. It is better to leave this business of judging to God. He knows all things. He knows the hearts of men. He will judge all believers at the judgment seat. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10, 12).
14. Those who have never been born again will be judged at the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

II. LEAVING GOD OUT OF OUR PLANS

1. Christians can also be guilty of leaving God out of their plans (4:13-15).
2. Proverbs 27:1 says, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."
3. "Go to now" (4:13) is an interjection implying disapproval (cf. 5:1).
4. Hiebert says it was a common expression in secular Greek but it is found only twice in the New Testament.
5. The New King James Version and the modern translations render this expression, "Come now." We might say, "Come on now."
6. Life is very short – especially from God's perspective – none of us knows what will take place tomorrow (4:13-15).
7. Our Lord warned of the rich man who left God out of his plans (Luke 12:16-21).
8. James 4:14 reminds us of the brevity of life. Our days are like little wisps of smoke or steam that vanish in a moment. Our days are uncertain and they are fleeting.
9. Psalm 90:12 says, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."
10. The most important thing in life is knowing the will of God, and doing the will of God.
11. First John 2:17 says, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
12. This Scripture is on D.L Moody's tombstone.
13. I knew a preacher who used to put "D.V." in his letters – for the Latin phrase *Deo Volente*, "Lord willing" (cf. James 4:15).
14. The apostle Paul told his friends in Ephesus, "I will return again unto you, if God will" (Acts 18:21).

15. And he wrote in First Corinthians 4:19, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will."

III. LEAVING GOD OUT OF OUR ACTIVITIES

1. There are sins of omission as well as sins of commission (4:17).
2. James does not give any specific examples, but many could be cited.
3. For example, Samuel said to the people of Israel, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23).
4. So not praying is a sin (cf. James 4:2).
5. Secularism means leaving God out of everything.

CONCLUSION:

1. In this chapter, James gives many practical lessons on the danger of worldliness, pride, and secularism. We need to consider where this leads.
2. Adolph Hitler had these words inscribed over one of the gas ovens in Auschwitz: "I want to raise a generation of young people devoid of a conscience, imperious, relentless and cruel."
3. This is precisely what happens when people reject the Bible and embrace secularism. Hitler was able to take over Germany because the churches turned away from the Bible.
4. Now Europe has become totally secularized. They are bankrupt financially, spiritually, and morally. And if these trends continue, soon their godless secularism will be replaced by militant Islam.
5. This same spirit of secularism and apostasy is sweeping over America.
6. Pray for revival!