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THE FIRES OF JEALOUSY

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES
NUMBER 28
JAMES 3:14-17

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JAMES 3:14-17 "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts: glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

To understand this passage, let us get a correct translation of verse 13. "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him demonstrate his production from an honorable manner of life in the sphere of grace orientation."

1. Only the believer with an Edification Complex and a believer who has moved into super grace can obey this command. This is a command, which, if followed, always leads to stability and spiritual maturity.
2. Since this is a rhetorical question, we have a challenge from it. Rhetorical questions of this kind are designed to challenge us. The believer who comes to have real understanding will find that his knowledge is related to honor.
3. This verse is saying that it is time to enter the super grace life. It is a time to realize that happiness is available, inner victory can be your possession.
4. The great hinderance to this kind of living is "falling from grace" which is reversionism.
5. Therefore, in this passage which is just coming up, we have a dissertation on reversionism. The next three verses will be devoted to the problems of the reversionist.
 - Verse 14--Reversionism cannot produce
 - Verse 15--Demonism is the source of reversionism
 - Verse 16--The instability of reversionism
6. Then the last two verses of this chapter, by way of contrast to reversionism, present the amazing life of stability and spiritual victory.

JAMES 3:14 "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth." Reversionism cannot produce. It cannot produce the honorable life. It cannot produce happiness, love or freedom within the soul. It can't produce anything of real value.

The verse begins with the particle "de" and it is a conjunction of contrast. He doesn't use the usual "alla" but "de" and in this way, we know he is really going to hit this hard. This verse introduces the dishonorable life of jealousy. Jealousy will appear twice in this passage. "Bitter envying" in verse 14 is jealousy. "Envying" in verse 16 also means jealousy. This is the key to the miserable life of the reversionist. A rash of mental attitude sins break out when jealousy

gets in the driver's seat. It takes a strong will to fire up the boiler of jealousy. Jealousy not only fires up the will but it also fires up the brain. One of the Hebrew words for jealousy is also the word for heat. This participle "de" is a shift. Next we have "ei" and this introduces a first class condition. The words "ye have" is a present, active, indicative of "echo" and it means "to have and possess." The word for "bitter" is "pikros." The word for "envying" is "zelos." So thus far this has said, "But if you have and possess bitter jealousy, and you do." The outstanding man oriented to grace in the previous verse is now contrasted to the reversionistic jealous man

This will illustrate the facts we have observed, that you don't get sweet and bitter water from the same fountain. You don't get olives and grapes from the same vines. This "de" is the dividing line. They had once been honorable but had now fallen into mental attitude sins and the one mentioned here is jealousy.

(Now you are a private person and no one really knows what is going on in your mind, no one but God. God can look in that mind of yours and really know all that goes on there. Friends, even your closest friend may not know what goes on in your mind, but God does know.)

This first class condition has established the fact that you do have and possess the fire of jealousy in your mind. Now jealousy does not stand alone. It always produces something, and that something is strife (Take King Saul as an illustration. He was a massive man, physically. But when little David came along and became the people's idol, King Saul's mind became ablaze with jealousy. Remember, jealousy can eat up the mind and destroy effectiveness in a life.)

The word "strife" in our passage here is "eritheia" and means contentiousness. Now where is contentiousness located? The passage says, "In your hearts." This passage says jealousy and contentiousness is located in the mind.

Next comes the command "not to glory" in these things. This is a present, middle, imperative of "kauchaomai" and it means "to boast." It says, "Now you stop, you, yourself, stop boasting," Next it says, "Stop lying" and this is a present, middle, imperative of "pseudo."

A reversionist always does two things--he boasts and he lies. He tries to impress others, so he boasts. This is the whitewash he displays. This then leads on to lying. The more sensitive you become, the more you boast. The more you boast, then the more you move into lying. This causes you to play one person over against another and on and on it goes until you are a hyper-sensitive reversionist.

This verse draws an accurate picture of a reversionist and it is a universal truth. It operated this way in James' day and it still operates this way today. A jealous person is always a lying trouble-maker.

Now get a correct translation of this verse.

"But if you have bitter jealousy and contentiousness in your minds, (and you do) stop boasting and stop lying against the truth." The words "against the truth" come from "kata alethei" and it means against the true facts of the case. These people couldn't recover from reversionism because they were jealous and contentious. They just didn't have the capacity to carry the truth around with them.

If the people listening to this message would just take to heart this valuable teaching in verse 14, just think of how much misery would be avoided. If the fires of jealousy and contentiousness are burning in your mind now, for your own sake and for the sake of others, begin now to quench these fires with Bible doctrine. Jealousy can destroy you before you know it.

JAMES 3:15 "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." This verse is going to tell us where we discover the source of reversionism.

1. Since the believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the believer cannot be demon possessed.
2. However, the believer can be indwelt with the doctrine of demons 1 TIMOTHY 4:1 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"
3. The doctrine of demons infiltrates the souls of reversionistic believers. It is a gradual process and begins with the neglect of doctrine. Indifference to doctrine leads to a cold rejection of doctrine, and in flows doctrine from demons. As the soul blacks out, in flows doctrine from demons.
4. Negative volition toward doctrine develops scar tissue in the soul and a vacuum is created. Into this vacuum comes a frantic search for happiness and the doctrine of demons flows in.

In this verse the words "this wisdom" refers to the doctrine of demons. The words are "aute he sophia" and this is pseudo wisdom. This is not God's wisdom.

Look at 1 Timothy 4:1 again. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" "Some shall depart from the faith" is just another way of expressing reversionism.

(Illustration: By way of illustration I will quote from a letter I received the week this message was prepared. I am not betraying any confidence for you have no idea who wrote this letter. Here is in part what she said:

"I heard you preach this morning. You said that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God and that God will keep his promise to give us eternal life.

When I was seventeen years old, I accepted Christ as my Saviour. I lived a devoted Christian life for some years. I thought I had eternal life. But I've been a perpetual backslider. I would be near to God, then far away. This went on over and over again, just like in the life of the nation of Israel.

Some years ago I became addicted to TV and have watched it and have read things that I should not have read.

I have had a heavy load, taking care of a mentally ill husband, making decisions alone all the time. Now I am so far from God I feel forsaken and condemned I can hardly live from day to day. I am afraid I have committed the unpardonable sin or crossed God's deadline. Is it possible to have your faith restored more than once or twice? Or am I just another Judas. I've wasted many years, but I can't feel that God wants me to destroy myself. Isn't there something I can still do for Christ?"

I get more letters like this one and on this theme than on any other. This is another case of reversionism. People once walked close to the Lord, but now they have fallen away. They have neglected to take in doctrine. They have failed to fortify themselves for the battles that come in life.

1 TIMOTHY 4:2 "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

You see, this is exactly what James has been talking about in his message. "Lies and conscience seared with a hot iron." The hot iron is jealousy and contentiousness.

Back in James 3:15 we note this wisdom "descendeth not." We have the present, active, indicative of "eimi" plus "ouk." The word for "descend" is a present, active, participle of "katerchomai." The word for "from above" is "anothen." So look what we have here--"This wisdom, this demon doctrine, is not descending from heaven, from above; but it is on the earth, soulish, coming from demons."

This word "but" here is "alla," which is the normal conjunction of contrast. It then says three things about this demon wisdom--Earthly-sensual--devilish. The word for "earthly" is "epigeios" and means this wisdom is earthly wisdom. Since the Devil is at this time the ruler of this earth, this jealousy and contentiousness is devil wisdom. The next word is "sensual" and is from "psuchikos" and it means soulish. The next word is "Devilish" and is from "daimondiodes" and it means "coming from demons."

JAMES 3:16 "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." This verse explains the instability of reversionism. "Gar" is an explanatory particle, and introduces the reason for jealousy and contentiousness. The word "where" is from "hopou" and really means "in what place." So this verse says, "For in what place jealous and contentiousness?" Then the verse gives the answer. "Ekei" and this means "in that place where there is confusion." The word for "confusion" is "akatastasia" and it means a wide emotional swing and it means instability. The words "every evil work" means "every vile practice." So the monster has finally been developed in the soul. The monster is jealousy and contentiousness.

What is God's answer to all this? Does God have something to substitute for jealousy and contentiousness? Indeed he does. Look at the verse which follows.

JAMES 3:17 "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." God's wisdom is from above. It is pure and peaceable and gentle. This is such a thrilling study that I don't think it would be fitting to put it in this paper with jealousy and contentiousness. Therefore, we will make this our next study.