

I. Introduction

- A. Thank you for being part of our worship today as we open God's Word together.
- B. Today is How to Be a Grown Up, part seven. In case this is your first time with us, here's what we are doing.
- C. We are opening our heart to God's message in the Bible. Specifically, we are looking at the book of James.
 - 1. James was the half brother of Jesus.
 - 2. He led a huge church of thousands of people in ancient Jerusalem.
 - 3. He was passionate about spiritual growth, and spiritual maturity.
 - a) He stated the theme of his book in 1:4, that you would be "perfect [mature] and complete lacking nothing." That means you go from being saved, to being a spiritual newborn, through spiritual adolescence, and all the way to spiritual adulthood and all that it means.
 - b) It means you push away from the kiddie table, and join the feast of grace.
 - c) The thing that fuels all this is the deep embedding of the Word of God in your psyche.
 - (1) You have spiritual privileges — use them.
 - (2) You have spiritual riches — spend them.
 - (3) You have spiritual power — flex your muscle.
 - (4) You have spiritual authority — take control of your life from all the crazy forces pulling you part.
 - (5) You have spiritual potential — fulfill it to the maximum.
 - d) At the end of the day, don't leave grace on the table. Grow in grace and grow in knowledge. We have seen all of this in the book of James.
 - D. If you grow in grace and knowledge, you will experience amazing results. We have summarized these results in what we are calling the Royal Family Honor Code. Here is the main idea from each section of James so far:

II. The Royal Family Honor Code

- A. Also known as "things a grown up would say."
 - 1. EMOTIONAL OWNERSHIP: I take full ownership of my emotional state by the grace and power of God. (James 1:1-11)
 - 2. MORAL RESPONSIBILITY: I take full responsibility for my moral choices and their consequences, because I have been empowered by God to live in victory over every single temptation. (James 1:12-18)
 - 3. SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION: I create a life in which my inner world is aligned with my outer world and both are aligned with God's Word. (James 1:19-27)
 - 4. VIRTUE LOVE: I love the people around me from the virtue, maturity, and character in my own soul, not because of what they can give me or what I think they're worth. (James 2:1-13)
 - 5. REALITY CHECK: I embrace a core reality called salvation, and I live it out in word, thought, and deed everywhere and all the time. (James 2:14-26)
 - 6. GRACE OPERATING SYSTEM: My words, choices, relationships, and instincts express the grace and truth of God, as I rise above the devil's lies through the deeply embedded knowledge of God's Invincible Word. (James 3:1-18)
 - a) And today, we will add RFHC number 7.
 - 7. DRAMA FREE ZONE: My relationships and psychology are so fortified by grace and truth that my life is a drama free zone, growing beyond the drama of my world, the deficits of my past, and the deceptions of the devil.
 - a) This will be all kinds of fun as we develop it, here in chapter 4.

III. Exposition

- A. *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)*
 - 1. James is a pastor.
 - 2. James is a pastor watching his people self-destruct.
 - 3. James is a pastor who has tried a thousand ways to entice his people to the grown up table. There's lasagne, rigatoni, baked mostaccioli, Italian sausage, and fettuccine Alfredo. The table overflows with wine and pastries and a feast fit for royalty. The deep truths of God and the wonders of a God-blessed life. It's all right here. This is what James has provided his people over and over and over again, yet his people are addicted to the Kiddie table. They're addicted to McNuggets and cold French fries... and the results are catastrophic.
 - 4. The results are that they have no control over the dark side of their personalities.
 - 5. Where do wars and fights come from among you? This is every kind of conflict. Between parents and children. Between a husband and wife. Conflict in marriage. Conflict in singleness. Conflict between friends. Conflict in politics. Conflict between nations.
 - 6. Why all the hate?
 - 7. Because we're nuts inside. This is some of the most psychologically penetrating analysis ever written in the ancient or modern world. This is the perfect integration of theology with psychology.
 - 8. The heart is a viper's nest. Conflicted and conflicting. One desire wars with another desire and this spills into relationships.
 - 9. James mentions obvious ways and less obvious ways.
 - a) The obvious ways, he says, are wars and fighting and coveting and murder.
 - b) The less obvious ways this internal conflict becomes external conflict James mentions toward the end.

- (1) This is the dysfunctional way of relating you might call “not asking.”
10. You do not have because you do not ask.
11. This is meant in terms of relationships. There are straight ways of relating, and there are crooked ways of relating. Direct ways of relating and indirect ways of relating.
12. Whatever is toxic in a relationship, when you bury it, it goes underground, doubles in strength, and comes out sideways.
 - a) Sarcasm. Cynicism. Passive aggression. Teasing. Snapping. Manipulation. Domineering. Hyper-critical spirit. Gossip. Slander. Backbiting. Disproportionate response. Intimidation. Whispering. Cold shoulder. On and on and on.
13. The human heart is addicted to drama. Ask Hollywood. Ask the evening news. If it bleeds it leads. Why? Because we are all a bunch of hairy drama queens. The inevitable result of sin is chaos. Drama.
14. But it gets worse. Because not only are we addicted to drama, but we are all committed to dragging other people into our drama so they can be on our side. And so we paint ourselves in the most angelic light possible, and our opponents in the most demonic light possible, and then we say — listen, unless you want to be on the side of demons, you need to stand with me, me, me. Here’s your torch. Here’s your pitchfork. Let’s go burn the other side down.
15. Or, as James said earlier, *“Behold how great a forest a little fire kindles”* (3:5).
 - a) I’m telling you, there is nothing in the evening news that would surprise James, except for maybe the technology. But the human heart is the human heart, and nothing has ever changed.
16. And so there are wars and fightings among you.
17. What is the source of all of this?
18. Every believer in Jesus is running two parallel operating systems.
 - a) There is the Grace OS, in which you are a serious student of the Word of God, so that you begin to think like Christ, and respond to the world the way he did.
 - b) And there is the Hell OS, in which you have been seduced by the beautiful lies of the devil. This Hell OS produces all the wretched drama this verse is talking about.
19. Notice this miserable combination of hedonism and narcissism that James points to.
 - a) *You ask and do not receive...* a phrase that means your life is essentially unsatisfying.
 - b) *Because you ask amiss...* how so?
 - c) *That you may spend it on your lusts...* that is hedonism and that is narcissism all rolled into one hot mess.
20. And when you mix the love of pleasure with the love of self, you create a vicious cycle of love destroying energy. So this damages your human relationships — all kinds of wars and fightings among you. This toxic psychological stew does terrible harm to human relationships, but that’s not where it stops.
- B. *Adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?* (James 4:4, 5)
 1. By the way, all the modern translations correctly say Adulteresses. They do not say Adulterers and Adulteresses, as the NKJV says. Because a.) the historically best and oldest manuscripts just say Adulteresses, and, b.) because we, the collective group of all believers in Jesus, who comprise what is called “the church” — we are the Bride of Christ. He’s the groom.
 2. And that makes us, when we cheat on him, adulteresses.
 3. Sorry for the harsh language, email James.
 4. So let’s talk about this word adultery, please don’t get nervous.
 - a) To adulterate something is to dilute it, or to water it down.
 - b) So you have a glass of wine, but you adulterate it by adding water, so it is only half as strong.
 - c) You have a sexual bond with your spouse, but you adulterate that bond by having an affair with another person — so each bond is only half as strong, get it.
 - d) And then there is that place of love that only God can fill. A bond of affection with your Father, Creator, and Friend. But you dilute that bond by loving the world — so each bond is only half as strong. And the crazy thing about the world, is that, like a virus, it offers receptors that mesh with needy parts of your heart, and once meshed, block out the real thing which is the love of God.
 5. So, the problem here is being a friend of the world.
 6. We have studied this at least one million times.
 7. The Greek word is kosmos. It comes into English as both Cosmos with a C, and cosmetics. It is cosmetics that is most in play here. Because kosmos means the systematic arrangement of a thing. In this case, the thing is a philosophy.
 8. By world, here, James means a philosophy. To be specific, it is a philosophy that leaves no room for God — or, if it leaves room for God, it leaves no room for Jesus — or, if it leaves room for Jesus, it leaves no room for sin, human fallenness, and divine forgiveness through the Crucifixion, shed blood, and resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
 9. To love the world is to embrace a philosophy that comes from the devil. This philosophy seems very appealing on the outside. This is super important to understand:
 - a) *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.* (2 Corinthians 11:14)
 10. The philosophy of the world seems very appealing on the outside, but it is inspired by the devil.
 11. It is dark on the inside.
 12. It is different for every age. It is different for every culture. But the core is always the same:

- a) God is less than he is.
 - b) Humans are more than God says we are.
 - c) Salvation, however it is construed, is by works.
 - d) Truth is whatever we make it to be.
13. If you embrace that philosophy, you are worldly. And if you are worldly, you cannot be a friend of God — like Abraham was a friend of God back in chapter two (2:25).
 14. So let's just pause here to remind ourselves of something.
 15. There is a battle going on, and the battlefield is your mind. This impacts your emotions. This impacts your morals. This impacts your relationships. This battle defines your psychology, which is the main thing James is talking about.
 16. When the Word of God wins the battle for your mind, you tend toward peace (that is the next paragraph).
 17. When the cosmos diabolicus wins the battle for your mind, you tend toward needless drama and chaos.
 18. But the deeper problem is this. The ultimate desire of God is this:
 - a) *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5)*
 19. The kind of relationship God wants with you revolves around love. It is more than obedience, more than service, more than ritual, more than morality, more than religiosity, more than some legalistic imposition of sacrifice and duty and payments to obtain his favor. God is completely unlike the gods of the nations of all of history.
 20. He invites you to love him, and this starts in the mind.
 21. To know him God is to love him.
 - a) This is not a desperate love, because God will not cry himself to sleep if you don't love him. He is complete in himself, and doing fine without you.
 - b) This is not a romantic love, because, eeewww. This love far transcends emotion and sentimentality and romance.
 - c) This is a love of respect, and affection, and admiration, and trust — a profound bond of affection wrapped around gratitude — just like the love between a faithful child and an ideal father.
 - (1) The Word of God alone creates that love. Do not tell me you want to love God if you are unwilling to meet it in profound ways in Scripture.
 - (2) Love the Lord with all your mind.
 22. This is why if you love the world system, you have broken the relationship between you and God. You are saved. You are going to heaven. But you have become disloyal to the one who loved you best and most, and you cannot call yourself a friend of His.
 23. The last phrase means this: there is a holy jealousy — completely unrelated to romance and sentiment — a holy jealousy that God holds toward you.
 24. And when you push him away, you buy into all the chaos of a heart running on Hell's Operating System.
 25. This is the book of James.
 26. But you say, Wow. I'm a big dummy. I have blown it. I love the world more than I love God. And there is a lot of drama in my life.
 27. Please show me the way out.
 28. Okay, and thank you James.
- C. But He gives more grace. *Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:6-8)*
1. These are all saying the same thing.
 2. Either God has your heart, or he doesn't.
 3. If he doesn't you face chaos and needless drama.
 4. If he does, you move toward wholeness and peace.
 5. The way back to him is always the same way: grace. The way to turn on grace is humility. The way to turn off grace is pride. Simple.
 6. God resists the proud. This is James exactly echoing the Old Testament from a thousand years before even he lived.
 - a) *Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble. (Proverbs 3:34)*
 - (1) Humility is dependency on the Lord. Pride is self-sufficiency.
 - (2) Humility is faith. Pride is works.
 - (3) Humility is grace orientation. Pride is performance orientation.
 - (4) Humility is teachability. Pride is knowing it all.
 - (5) Humility makes Scripture the measure of truth. Pride makes your own opinion the measure of truth.
 - (6) Humility is trusting the Savior and the Old Rugged Cross. Pride is thinking you can reach God by your own resources.
 - (7) Humility is thinking the way the Bible says to think. Pride is thinking the way the cosmos diabolicus says to think.
 - b) God resists the proud — he actively, deliberately sets himself to block and tackle and resist the person stubborn in their pride. You live a graceless existence.
 - c) But God gives grace to the humble — you begin to experience day by day the mountains of beautifully wrapped grace-gifts that became yours the day you received Jesus.
 7. How do I be humble? It's all right here:

- a) *Submit to God...* God, what you say to think, I will think. What you say to believe, I will believe. What you say to do, I will do by the power you give me. My dominion, and authority, and influence will never rise higher than my humility and submission to God. Grace seeks humility like a heat seeking missile.
 - b) *Resist the devil...* his lies, his influence, his subtle insinuations. Push back. Be different. Think differently. Don't just go with the flow. When the devil comes to tempt you, punch him in the face with Bible memory verses.
 - (1) *And he will flee from you...* because he has no power in your life but what you give him by believing his lies.
 - c) *Draw near to God...* no matter how dirty you feel, no matter how hypocritical you feel, no matter how much of a failure you feel. Draw near to God. Bring your heart to him. Bring your mind to him. Bring your prayers to him. Bring your emotions to him. Bring your struggles to him. Bring your doubts to him. And what happens?
 - (1) *He will draw near to you...* Even if you smell bad, look bad, are bad. And he doesn't meet you in the middle. He was already there waiting before you moved an inch.
 - d) *Cleanse your hands, you sinners...* quit being the source of drama and start being the source of peace. End the toxicity. End the indirectness. Be done with the narcissism, and lay aside the hedonism. Some of us need a long hot shower in the cleaning stream of Scripture (Eph. 5:26).
 - e) *And purify your hearts, you double minded...* turn your double allegiance into a singular allegiance, because that is the only way to not be crazy and it is the only way to turn off the drama machine. Plus, it is the only way to love God, and it is the only way to be a grown up. Turn your double allegiance into a singular allegiance. This is the way out of spiritual adultery, and the way back into a singular spiritual bond with God.
8. Grace has an off switch: pride.
 9. Grace has an on switch: humility.
 10. It's like that with human relationships. It's like that with God.
 11. With pride comes chaos.
 12. With humility comes RFHC #7:
 13. DRAMA FREE ZONE: My relationships and psychology are so fortified by grace and truth that my life is a drama free zone, growing beyond the drama of my world, the deficits of my past, and the deceptions of the devil.
 - a) Do you see where we're getting all this? Things only a grown up can say.
 - b) One last paragraph.
- D. *Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:9, 10)*
1. I get that this may be painful for some, but let's dig in. Why does he say lament and mourn and weep and why does he say to let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom? Why? Is this just religious negativity? Is this James's pessimism on steroids? Why all the negativity here?
 2. Because when you go up the sidewalk to commit adultery against the person who loves you as well as God loves you, and you are even half-way in touch with reality, this is how you are going to feel. It isn't a party. It isn't a good time had by all. You should feel horrible.
 3. Because you are creating a double-emotional bond with God, which is a heartbreak in the making and a psychological train wreck in the making.
 4. You should feel terrible, but you mask it with artificial pleasure that only leaves you hollow in the end.
 5. There is nothing the world can offer you that can satisfy your soul like a deepening relationship with the Lord. By comparison, everything else is fluff.
 6. But the great thing, the wonderful thing, is that grace is always the way back. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord... come to him like a prodigal's return... and he will lift you up.
 7. There is no sin so deep, there is no failure so final, and there is no mistake so terminal that God can't turn you around, set your feet on solid ground, and restore to you the joy of your salvation.
 8. DRAMA FREE ZONE: My relationships and psychology are so fortified by grace and truth that my life is a drama free zone, growing beyond the drama of my world, the deficits of my past, and the deceptions of the devil.
- IV. Bible memory review
- A. *James 1:2, 3: My brethren, count it all joy when...*
 - B. *James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from...*
 - C. *James 1:19, 20: So then, my beloved brethren, let every...*
 - D. *James 2:12: So speak and so do as...*
 - E. *James 2:23: And the Scripture was fulfilled which say...*
 - F. *James 3:17: But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*
 - G. *James 4:6: But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*