

**WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE ...  
(James 4:4-12      March 20, 2017)**



The problem with many Christians is that they are practicing polytheists – they say they worship only the one true God – but in practice they also worship another god.

Now, they would flat out deny it – but the reality is that there is another god. A god who is actually the dominant deity in their lives.

Who is this god? They encounter them every morning when they look in the mirror.

And then so much of their day is structured around pleasing that god.

You see the reality is that they have one God – the Lord – who is there to save them – and one god – themselves – who gets the best of their worship and attention.

James is clear – the true God will not share His glory with especially when one of those masters is you.

If you are actually the one you love the most and devote the most time, worship and resources to – then don't call yourself a Christian.

We are working our way through James which is a book that tells us we need to:

# GROW UP

## Wisdom for living our faith in a broken world

### **GROW UP**

And to enable this, he gives us:


#### **Wisdom for living our faith in a broken world**

This morning James is going to tell us that a mark of maturity is that we orient our lives to worship one God and one God alone.

The throne of our hearts has just the one God.

If the Lord is just an add on – the one you give token time and allegiance to in order to save you – then that is idolatry – that is spiritual adultery.

In our passage this morning, James is clear:



If God is not your bestie  
- then you are

**If God is not your bestie – then you are.**

**If God is not your bestie – then you are.**

The world says – you have to love yourself. Be true to yourself.

That is a lie that will send you to hell.

Putting yourself first – is to put yourself in the place of God – and it makes God your enemy.

Self-love – self-worship – that is idolatry – that is adultery – and God hates it.

James knows this. First, he says there is:

# The Friend You Must Lose

4



## The Friend You Must Lose 4

Turn with me to James 4:4:

You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God.

Friendship with the world is a friendship we simply must lose.

When you read this you might think – hang on James – isn't that overstating things a bit?

Friendship is benign. It isn't an adulterous type of relationship.

Adultery and friendship are two different things.

I have female friends – doesn't mean I am adulterous.

Same way, if I dabble a bit in the world – as long as things don't get out of hand it doesn't make me spiritually adulterous.

We need to understand that James uses friendship in a way that is much stronger than the way we use it.

Often, we think of friendship as a very superficial relationship. We might have 300 "friends" on Facebook – most of whom we barely know.

But friendship in James' time was much deeper.

L.T. Johnson says that friendship in James' day involved 'sharing all things' in a unity both spiritual and physical.<sup>1</sup>

Think more a deep and intimate relationship.

Think more friends with benefits.

Think a friendship where your deep needs are met.

As Christians you covenanted – You my God – I will be satisfied in You. So, this type of intimate friendship with the world **is** akin to adultery.

Maybe think about it like this. There are many couples Dena and I consider friends.

There are **no** couples where I have a deep and intimate relationship with the wife.

That kind of friendship is akin to adultery.

This is meant to shock us.

Over the years, I have been really disappointed at some of the sin committed by members of this church.

I have addressed this individually and corporately – but being diplomatic – probably too diplomatic – I used terms like sinner, failed to live up to expectations, didn't live as God called us to.

I don't think I have ever called anyone a *spiritual adulterer*.

James is not so timid – confronting as it is – he calls it for what it is – friendship with the world is adultery.

Over the past 100 years – the term 'adultery' has lost much of its sting.

We tend to use other words – cheated on, non-exclusive relationship – and it just doesn't carry the same shame.

I was in a room with half a dozen non-Christians recently where the majority of people in the room just came out and admitted that before they were divorced they had committed adultery.

There was no stigma – in fact it was almost a good on me for realising the grass was greener somewhere else. I met my needs – I loved me.

In the days of James – Roman society was more casual about sex – but Jews and Christians were still determined to stay true to their marriage covenant.

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Moo, D. J. (2000). *The letter of James* (p. 187). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

James is writing to Jewish Christians. Adultery was among the worst moral sins.

You break a covenant, you destroy trust, you bring incredible shame to your family.

Most families would rather have a murderer than an adulterer in their ranks.

There is almost no greater condemnation James could level.

These verses are not meant to be a slap on the wrist. This is meant to be a punch in the face. Friendship with the world puts your immortal soul at risk.

If you are in the world and not repentant – God is your enemy not your friend.

If you don't understand how seriously God views marriage and how deeply He hates adultery – you won't understand this passage.

Marriage is something God created.

He gave us this physical relationship to help us understand our spiritual relationship with Him.



Marriage is good, it is enjoyable – it serves many purposes – companionship, a way to bring children into the world and raise them – but importantly it is a visible picture of the kind of relationship we were created to have with God.

Marriage is one man and one woman united in a bond that is **covenantal, exclusive and designed to last for life**. What God has joined together let no man separate.



When God created Adam and then Eve – they were created to find their ultimate satisfaction and joy – **not** in each other – but in their relationship with God.

The Lord is the only perfect being. He is the only one who could ultimately satisfy their hearts.

This relationship is **covenantal, exclusive and designed to last forever.**

God is all we need. The world can't satisfy and to try and find satisfaction there breaks the covenant.

Jeremiah 31:32:

My covenant they broke even though I am their husband.

Think about Eden.

God in His mercy, gave Adam and Eve the whole world.



It was theirs to reign over and enjoy. They were given **dominion, as stewards, for life.**

Imagine God addressing Adam on the seventh day.

Adam my son – I am here in the garden with you. I walk with you. You have a relationship – a friendship with Me and Me alone.

Because I love you, everything you see is yours.

This beautiful world – seas, waterfalls, sunrises, oceans, tigers, oak trees.

Enjoy. You get to have fresh baked bread, olives, strawberry ice cream and cappuccinos. You are going to love this stuff.

You get to rule over the lions and eagles and whales. I appoint you king over My world.

And I haven't even got to the woman I made to be your companion. I think you will enjoy her – and I think she will enjoy you.

But here is the thing – Adam – and you too Eve. Out of my love – I give you this world and each other.

You can enjoy – but you must **never** worship them or seek to find true satisfaction in them. You will only find that in **Me**.

Eve is **not** your God.

Adam is **not** your God.

The creation is **not** your God.



You are **not** your God.

I – and I alone am the Lord your God.

Now, that was a sweet deal.

But what did they do? Listened to the serpent.

You can be like God.

What you really need to be satisfied is the one thing God said you can't have – that will complete you.

And the result – sin, the fall, banishment, flaming cherubs – and a destroyed relationship with the Creator.

Instead of friendship with God – there was enmity.

Instead of Eden – mankind was headed to hell.

But, even from the very first God said – there is a way back – I will send One who will crush the serpent's head.

Christ will come. And by faith He will restore you. There is a way back to a relationship of friendship.

A few verses earlier in James 2:23 we are told:

Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, **and he was called God's friend.**

We might read that and think – God and Abraham chatted and were on good terms.

No – it means Abraham's eternal destiny is changed. Friendship here is union with God – forever.

This is entirely an act of grace.

In his mercy God provided a way – faith – by which we can be saved.

Instead of enmity – we now have a friendship with God.

# The Friend You Must Lose

4



**But** God demands an exclusive relationship. We are not to have any other god-friends.

In fact, it is the kind of friendship I have with my wife. My love, devotion and heart is for one woman only.

James is clear – if God is not your bestie – your best friend – your only friend – your exclusive lover and the one alone you worship – then the reality is that the god who occupies the centre of your heart will be you – and that god will look for its satisfaction in the world – and you have to lose that friend.

If God is not your exclusive friend – then He is your enemy – and you do not want God as an enemy.

Romans 1:22–25:

Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. ... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator.

Friendship with the world means we worship and seek satisfaction in the creation – rather than the Creator.

Porn, adultery, lust – flow from worshipping the creation – men and women – their bodies – sex – rather than God.

Gluttony – seeks satisfaction in the creation – food – rather than God.

Materialism – looks for joy in the creation – things – rather than God.

Nothing in this creation is ultimate.

Even a wonderful thing like marriage – is not ultimate.

Jesus was single, Paul was single. And marriage does not continue into eternity.

If you think getting married will solve all your issues – you could not be more wrong. Only God can do that.

And if you befriend the world – if you seek to find your satisfaction in the world – **you make God an enemy!**

Why? Because you are breaking your covenant and putting the creation in the place God has reserved for Himself.

1 John 2:15–16:

Do **not** love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is **not** in him. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s possessions—is **not** from the Father, but is from the world.

Our eyes and then our hearts are drawn to the creature rather our hearts delighting in the Creator.

There are good things in the world – a spouse, children, grandchildren, food, the creation.

You are to enjoy them – but none of them can possibly meet the deep needs of our souls.

If you make family an idol – it will inevitably lead to disappointment and often even divorce, families shattered, lives ruined.

There are illicit things in the world – drugs, immoral sex, power.

They may give you a jolt of pleasure but it sours really fast.

Jeremiah says this. Jeremiah 2:13:

For my people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned me, the fountain of living water, and dug cisterns for themselves— cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.

Trying to find satisfaction in the creation is like a thirsty man turning from a flowing fountain – God – and trying to suck moisture from parched ground – and wondering why he is not satisfied.

God never fails to satisfy. Everything else fails miserably.

If you are single and think marriage will meet your deepest needs – it won't.

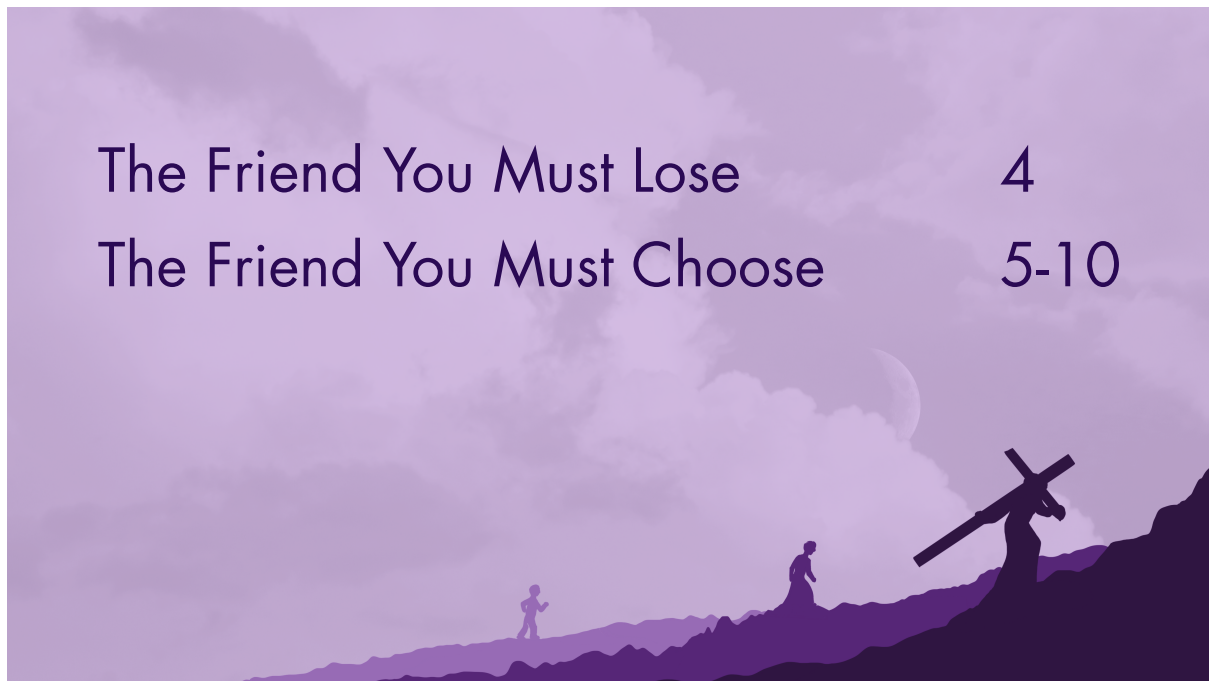
If you are married and think your spouse can meet your deepest needs – they can't.

If you think a bigger house, a larger superannuation, better health – will meet your yearnings – they can't.

So much counselling comes down to this – are you looking to be satisfied in the wrong place?

If you are friends with the world – you simply **must** lose that friendship.

Instead, there is:



### **The Friend You Must Choose 5-10**

Basically, you choose to enter into an exclusive relationship with God by faith and repentance.

Verse 5:

Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely?

This is a difficult verse. I think most likely it refers to God putting His Holy Spirit in us to make us His people and as a sign we are His.

He created us. And as Christians, He redeemed us.

We are bought by the blood of His Son – His ownership is sealed by His Holy Spirit.

That makes us His and His alone.

Deuteronomy 5:7–8:

Do not have other gods besides me. Do not make an idol for yourself in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth.

No other gods. Don't worship anything in the creation.

James says the Holy Spirit in us envies intensely – other translations say – yearns jealously – or jealously longs.

Some people think jealousy is bad.

There are certainly wrong jealousies. You can be jealous over something you have no rights over.

But there *are* relationships in which jealousy is expected.

Professor Randolph Tasker sums this up:

Married persons who felt no jealousy at the intrusion of an adulterer into their home would surely be lacking in moral perception for the exclusiveness of marriage is the essence of marriage.<sup>2</sup>

You *should* be jealous for your spouse's exclusive marital love!

I trust every husband here would feel righteous anger at the very thought of your wife being unfaithful.

Ask a devoted husband if he is happy to play second fiddle to another man or even share the affection of his bride with another.

Imagine now the perfect righteous divine anger of a spurned God.

God is jealous for you – the one bought at the cost of His Son.

God **should** be jealous of those He has made His bride.

God will **not** share His glory with another.

But even though we know this – we have looked to the world at times.

We know we are to seek first His kingdom – but the grass often looks a little greener in the kingdom of the world.

Our hearts say – life is a bit tough right now – I think you would enjoy a bit of the world.

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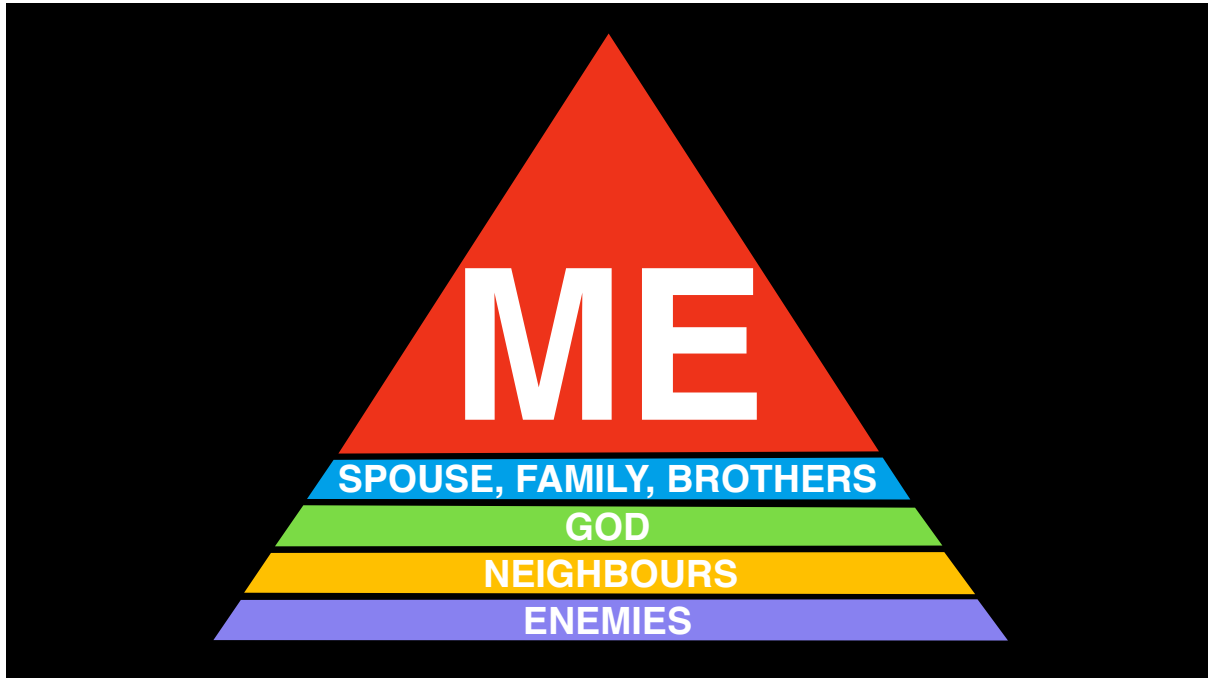
<sup>2</sup> Tasker, R.V.G. (1967), *The Epistle of James* (London: Tyndale Press) p. 106.

So, we taste a bit of the world – and then a bit more – and it does not satisfy.

So, try a bit more – try something else. God let you down. Your wife let you down.

And not only are you dissatisfied – but you make God an enemy.

Brothers and sisters – listen carefully.



Don't think that spiritual adultery is **just** running full on after money, sex and pleasure.

My life is actually mainly about ME.

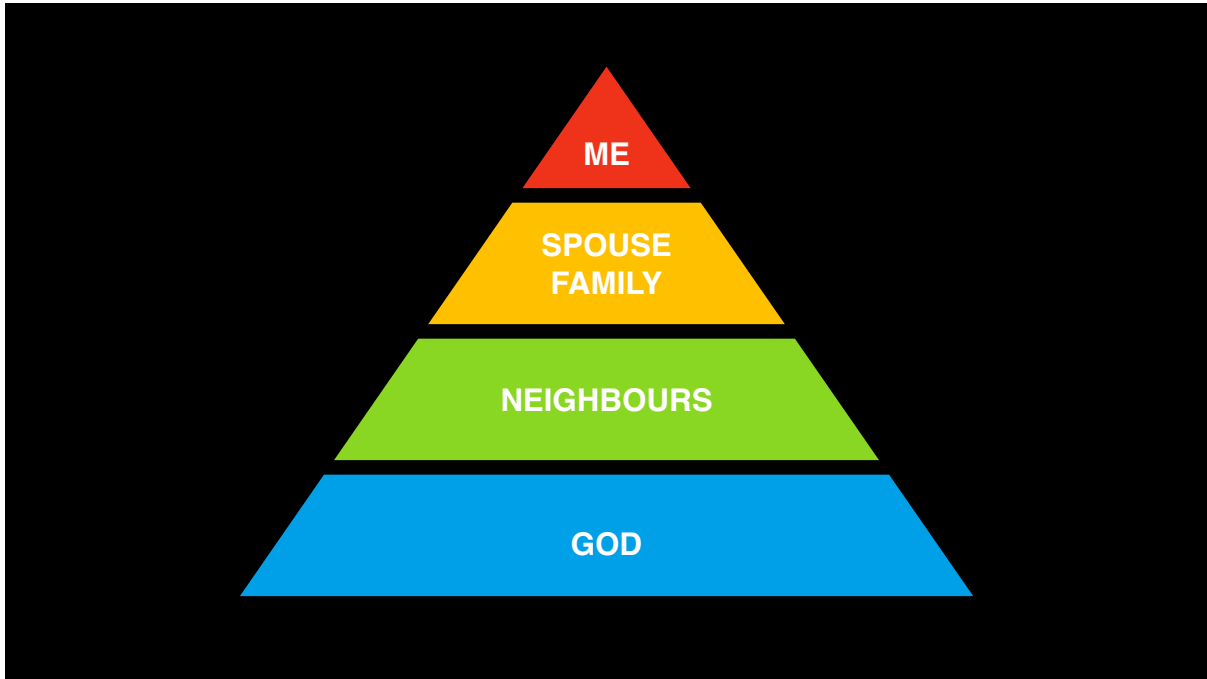
God is in there somewhere – that should be enough.

Hopefully no one could think they belong to God with a life like that.

But many of us think – unless my life is really bad – all me and lots of sin – then I am not a spiritual adulterer.

Well, be very careful.

I suspect that the majority of those Christians James was addressing had lives more like this.



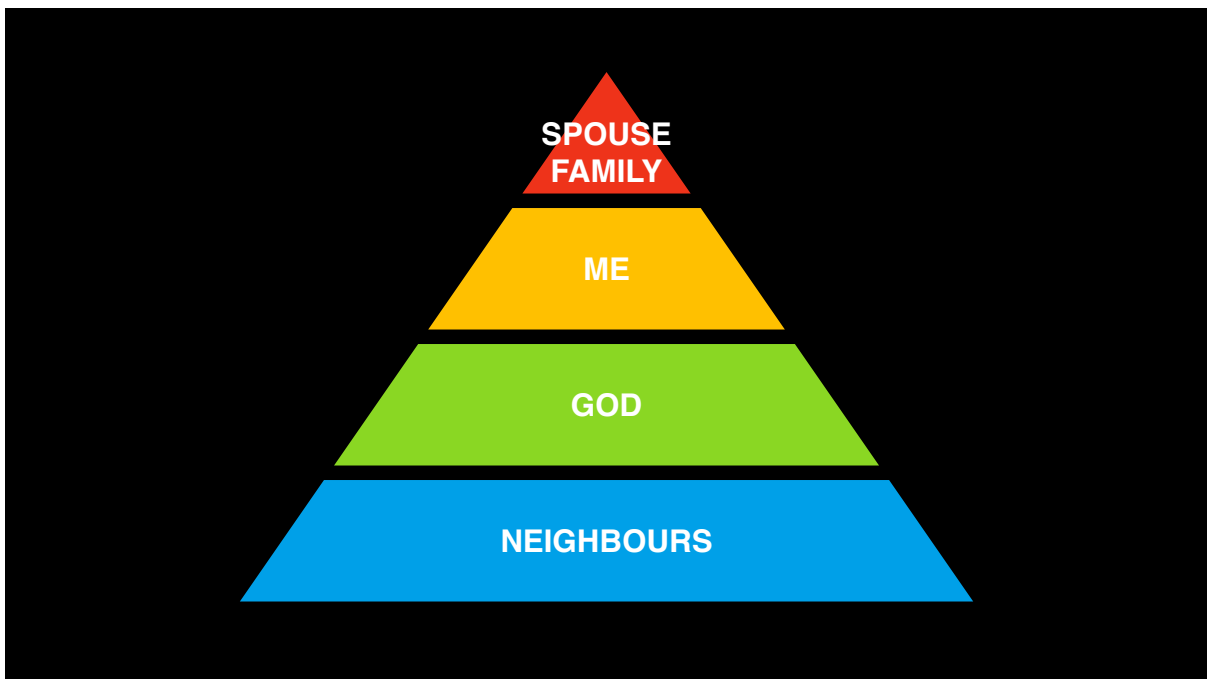
ME – SPOUSE AND FAMILY – NEIGHBOURS – GOD.

I am no Paul, no James – but I know God is IN my life – *somewhere*.

But I will confess that if you look at my life – other things are **more** important.

I probably work too hard, love things too much, family are probably too important and I don't serve God enough.

Or maybe their lives were more like this:



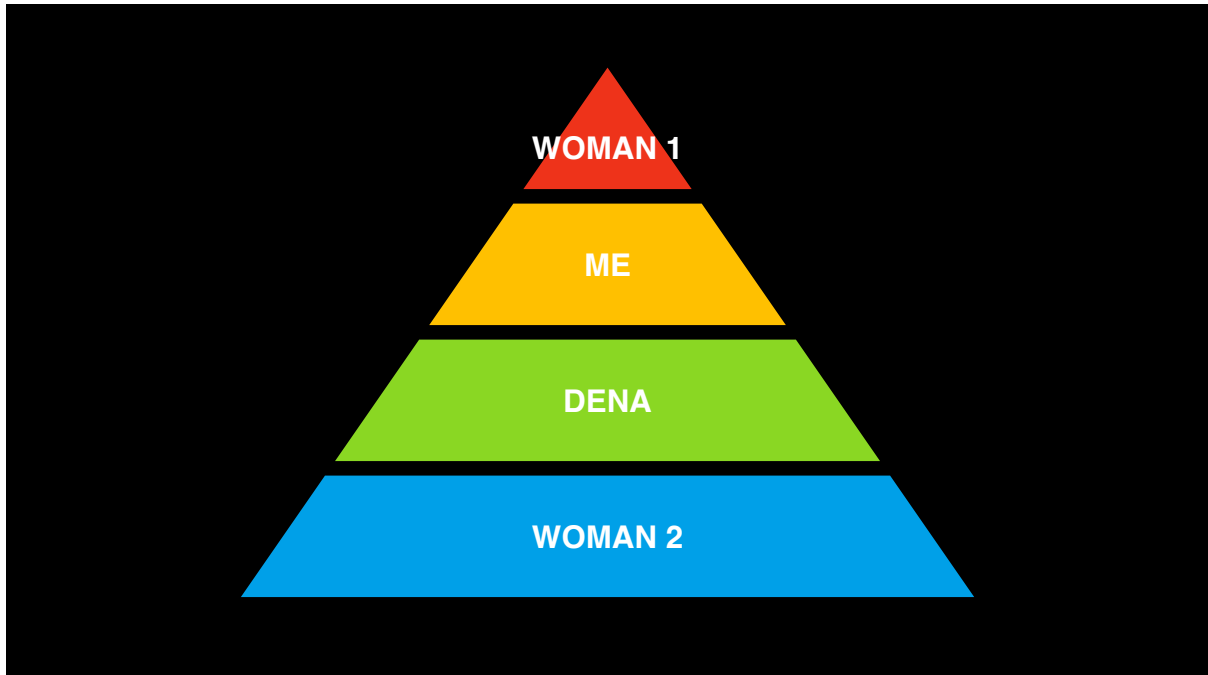
Family is important. When push comes to shove a man has to look after his family or he is no better than the pagans.

James says – be careful – if God is not **the** priority – it is spiritual adultery!

You **cannot** serve two masters. You **cannot** have the world and God.

Perhaps this might help.

I can tell you – if my life were revealed to look this:



That I have three women in my life – one of whom I actually love even more than me.

WOMAN 1 – ME – DENA – WOMAN 2

I could argue all I want:

Dena not sure why you are so worked up – clearly you are still important to me – you are part of my life – number 3 is still a pretty important part of my life.

I can tell you – if that was my life – it would be a miracle if I was not in intensive care before the next day dawned.

My wife is a jealous wife – praise the Lord!

James wants us to know – our God – is a jealous God – praise the Lord!

So – how does your life look?



If ASIO and Facebook really delved into you – and now we know they can – how you spend your money and time – what you watch and do – how you act towards others – how you treat yourself – where your heart is – how would your life look?

Who gets the supremacy? – GOD or YOU?

Because the answer to this tells you if you are a friend or an enemy of God.



Philippians 3:18–19:

For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; and they are focused on earthly things,

Even making your belly a god makes you an enemy of the cross.

If you have made a commitment to an exclusive relationship with God – but then move the Lord to the periphery of your life and seek to replace Him with the world – you incite His jealousy – you make Him an enemy.

James knows this is terribly dangerous ground.

It is not a big deal if someone unfriends you on Facebook.

It is an eternal deal if God unfriends you – because you become His enemy. And that means death – eternal death.

That is the bad news – the worst news. But, here is the good news.

**His grace is greater than your sin.**

No matter how adulterous you have been – **if** you humble yourself and repent – God will forgive you.

I'm not sure what your favourite verses or verses are in the Bible.

James 4:6 should be on your list.

**He gives greater grace!**

I've been doing a lot of premarital counselling recently. We talked about the seriousness of the commitment.

Because they are all madly in love – it is hard for them to imagine a fight in marriage – let alone such a grievous breach of trust as adultery.

All of them would say – I hope I could forgive that – I think I could forgive that. It would be hard to forgive such a huge breach of trust ... but I would like to think I could.

But God – who is holy – can't simply forgive such treachery.

Divine forgiveness is infinitely costly. It cost God His Son.

But God counted that cost and:

**He gives greater grace.**

Sam Allberry puts it this way:

God finds us in bed with the world and He still wants us back.

In his wonderful work – *The Bruised Reed* – Puritan Richard Sibbes wrote this:

**There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.**

How awesome is that?

**There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.**

Marvellous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured –  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace,  
Marvellous grace, infinite grace,  
**Grace that is greater than all our sin!**

Alec Motyer says of this verse:

What comfort there is in this verse! It tells us that God is tirelessly on our side. He ... always has *more grace* at hand for us. He is never less than sufficient.<sup>3</sup>

By grace – God is all we need.

### **He gives greater grace!**

But His grace comes in the form of the cross and in the person of Christ.

These are the *only* way back to friendship with God.

It starts with faith.

But real faith leads to fruit and repentance. James made that clear back in chapter 2.

Whether you have flirted with the world or dived headlong into the filth of the world there is a way to restore the relationship with the Friend you need.

### **Repentance!**

1 John 1:9:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

James knows this.

Humble yourself before God.

Verse 6:

Therefore he says: **God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.**

Repentance starts when we confess we need grace.

Notice that this section begins and ends with calls to humility in verses 6 and 10.

And in between are four sets of related commands. These commands tell us what a humbled, repentant heart does.

Repentance is not just saying sorry – please forgive me.

True repentance is doing everything in your power to turn from sin and not sin again.

This is what shows if you are a Christian or not. Do you fight to repent?

First – verse 7:

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<sup>3</sup> Motyer, J. A. (1985). *The message of James: the tests of faith* Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press. p. 150.

Therefore, submit to God.  
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

What does it mean to submit yourself to God and to resist the devil?

It means to continually choose to affirm His kingship in your life.

I choose God – not the world.

My life needs to reflect that.

I fight to remove Satan, the world, self from the place of pre-eminence.

We place ourselves, our egos, our ambitions, our hopes under the authority, direction and leading of God.

And we refuse the wisdom, temptations, lies of the devil. We choose to say no. We choose to follow the wisdom from above.

We choose to say – God first – even when it is hard.

When you do this – Satan will flee.

James doesn't say he flees the very first time you resist and never bothers you again.

He does say – if you continually frustrate him – if he finds no fertile ground for his arrows and temptations and lies – he will move on.

Not forever – but for a time.

The more you get this right – submitting to God and resisting Satan – the easier it is to live godly.

The more you give in – the harder it gets.

Brother and sisters – the great tragedy is that too many of us reverse these commands.

We resist God and submit to the devil.

We resist His commands – because we don't like them – too hard, too costly *and* we submit ourselves to Satan and the world – seems enjoyable – looks satisfying – then we wonder why our lives are such a mess.

Look, what if God doesn't give you the desire of your heart. You don't find that husband or that wife.

Too many say – well I'm miserable – submitting to God – trusting He knows best – was clearly a failure – His way didn't work – fine – Match.com it is – and anyone with a pulse will do – better to be unequally yoked than miserable.

I tell you – that is a path to even greater misery now and may lead to enmity with God.

Submit to him. Resist the devil. Let Him be enough to satisfy you.

Verse 8:

Draw near to God,  
and he will draw near to you.

This is the language found in Zechariah and Malachi.

This is prodigal son language.

When you choose to say no to the world and yes to God – we find God drawing near welcoming us.

The more we draw near – the more He satisfies.

Again, too many people I counsel want to try and reverse this order as well.

They say – well if God would draw near to me – *then* I would draw near to Him.

If God answered a few of my prayers and gave me a few desires of my heart – then I would worship Him.

But since God seems far off – since He hasn't met my needs, since He doesn't seem to care – well He had His shot so now I will draw near to the world – see if it can please me.

It can't. It is like a man dying of thirst who drinks sea water – it makes it worse.

**No!** Humble yourself, turn from the world, turn to God – and you will find He is more than enough.

Verse 8:

Cleanse your hands, sinners,  
and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

We repent and turn from the world.

We stop being double-minded men and women – those trying to have God and the world.

Cleanse your hands – turn from sin and the world.

Purify your hearts. Choose Christ and the wisdom from above.

If you don't like some aspect of your life – if something is empty or missing – don't delve more and more into the world – that is never the answer – repent of the world – turn from it.

Verse 9:

Be miserable and mourn and weep.  
Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Hate your sin not boast in it.

Mourning and weeping are the proper responses to grieving over sin and coming to God in repentance.

You have to hate your attempts to find satisfaction in the world.

We fail God. We spurn the love of Christ on the cross. We make ourselves our own god.

This should lead us to be broken and mourn.

Verse 10:

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Here is the paradox.

When we choose to humble ourselves – make ourselves low – make our egos and pride shrink and when we make much of God – then God gives us what we actually want – He exalts us.

He satisfies our souls and gives us places of honour in His kingdom.

But here is what we need to grasp – this humbling ourselves – this repentance is not a one-time thing.

It is a battle every day to take ME off the throne and ensure CHRIST is King.

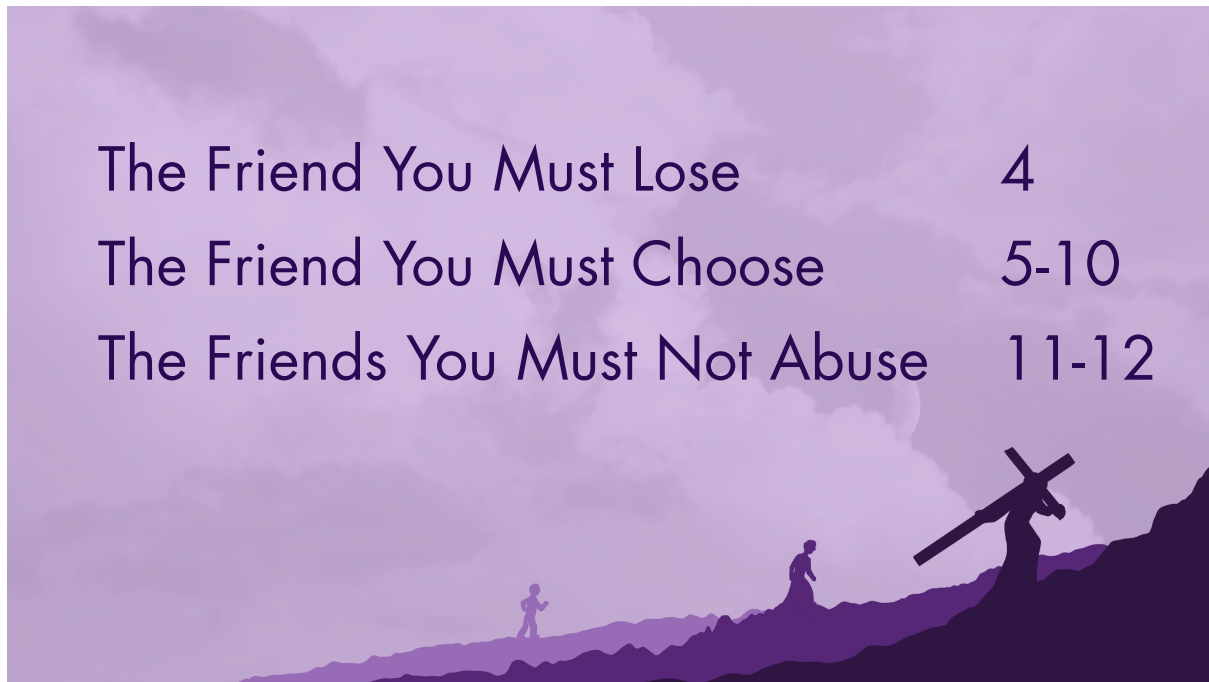
It is a battle to subdue pride.

We need to repent daily.

Choose God as a friend not an enemy.

If you have chosen the world – the way back to friendship with God is true repentance and true repentance requires the fruits of repentance.

Finally, our pride – our dalliance with the world – it not only harms us – it harms those close to us. So, James speaks of:



The Friend You Must Lose	4
The Friend You Must Choose	5-10
The Friends You Must Not Abuse	11-12

### **The Friends You Must Not Abuse 11-12**

James 4:11-12:

Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters. Anyone who defames or judges a fellow believer defames and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Here is what I think is going on here.

When God is not your satisfaction. When He is not the centre of our lives – we look to the world.

And one place we look to be satisfied in the world is through other people.

Spouses, children, friends, church members.

We should know – they can't satisfy our soul.

But all too often we tell ourselves – but they should – and when they don't we let them know it.

You failed me.

You are my problem.

You should meet my needs.

If you did what God tells you to do – I would be happy.

Spouses, children, friends, churches – I would be a rich man if I had a dollar for every time I was told how these had failed someone.

No – they were never able to satisfy.

Let me unpack these verses. The word here – *criticise* – is the same word translated *defame*. It also means – speak evil – speak against – slander – accuse falsely.

In the context – the law here probably refers to Jesus' summation of the law.

Matthew 22:36–39:

Which command in the law is the greatest. He said to him, “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.**”

What is the law? Love God supremely – with all your heart, soul and mind. **And** – love your neighbour as yourself.

Find your satisfaction in God – and instead of expecting others to meet your needs – you try and meet theirs.

Do this and you will find joy.

To decide I know better – my wife should meet my needs, Andrew and Han should meet my needs, the Ladies' Grace group leader should meet my needs – it is all about ME – is to judge the law – I know better than God.

You are not a doer.

God said I satisfy you and you love others.

We say they can satisfy me. Well:

There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

God can save and destroy – He is the One who can meet your needs and save if you are His friends and destroy if He is your enemy.

Judging your neighbour – putting them in the place of God – and then criticising them for failing to meet your needs – that is abusing them – and one sure way to disappointment.

James is clear, you are in strife if you make yourself god and then seek to satisfy and worship that god.



Your spouse can't truly satisfy. The world can't truly satisfy.

Only God can.

You must seek **first** His kingdom.

So, I want to close with a couple of diagnostic questions to help you assess whether your prime friendship is God or the world.

### **1. What would be your perfect life?**

Is it a husband or wife, three kids, a dog, a house in the suburbs, a holiday every two years, eating at a restaurant three times a year, good health and a good church?

If so, you are short-changing yourself and short-changing God and you may well be committing spiritual adultery.

You short-change yourself – because there is no guarantee you will marry or have kids or grandkids or any of the things you desire. No guarantee those relationships will be happy and fruitful.

And even if you got them – they won't satisfy your soul. They can't.

### **2. What are the real desires of your heart?**

Is it to **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.”**

Where do you spend your money?

How have you planned for your life to go?

How do you spend your time?

What are your passions?

How are your devotions?

Do you say no to things that hinder godly priorities?

If your desire to provide for family means you work 70 hours a week and have a maxed-out mortgage – such that you have no time or energy to serve the church and no money to support the kingdom – maybe your priorities are wrong – really wrong.

If you never have neighbours over or share the gospel – maybe your priorities are wrong – really wrong.

If your children or grandchildren are little idols who dominate your life – maybe your priorities are wrong – really wrong.

If you think – Oh my life would be so much fuller if – if I was married, single, richer, thinner, more respected – maybe your priorities are wrong – really wrong.

If you chose not to serve, give, share – because God didn't meet some perceived need and let you down – maybe your priorities are wrong – really wrong.

If your plan is to work hard until 65 – retire in the mountains, play with the grandkids and wait for Jesus to come – rather than serve hard now – and then when you retire live near the church or go on a church plant and use all that extra time and financial resources to serve the kingdom – maybe your priorities are wrong – really wrong.

You **cannot** serve two masters.

If any of these symptoms strike a chord with you – then the cure is at hand.

**He gives greater grace.**

Repent and get with God's program for your life. Let God be God.

He delights to exalt those who humble themselves and cling to His cross as their only sufficiency.

If you are not a Christian – perhaps you wonder why there are things you longed for – you finally got them – a wife, kids, a new car, a better job – but the satisfaction didn't last. You felt a pull to look elsewhere.

The answer is that God made you to only be satisfied in Him.

So, humble yourself. Tell Him – I want You to be my King. And He will exalt you.

If you are a Christian and you know this passage is you – spiritual adultery – a heart prone to wander – listening to the world.

Whether your heart has strayed a little or massively.

Whether you have dabbled in the world or had a full-on affair with the world.

**He gives greater grace.**

The good news is if you repent God is waiting to wash you, restore you and exalt you.

As great as your sin is – His mercy is greater.

**WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE ...**  
**(James 4:4-12      March 20, 2017)**

**Main Point: If God is not your bestie – then you are.**

**General Questions:**

1. What is 'friendship with God'?
2. Why is friendship with the world a form of adultery?
3. Why does it anger God and turn Him into an enemy?
4. In what ways is marriage a picture of our relationship with God?
5. Why can't the world and the things in the world actually satisfy our soul?
6. Why does so much in us say it can?
7. Why are things like porn or gluttony or materialism – worshipping the creation rather than the Creator?
8. How much of a relationship with the world do you have to have to cause God to become our enemy?
9. Is it a good thing that God is a jealous God? Why?
10. Why does repentance begin with humbling ourselves?
11. What is real repentance? Can you have repentance without fruits of repentance?
12. What are the fruits of repentance?
13. Why can other people not meet our deepest needs?

**Application Questions:**

1. Who actually has the supremacy in your life – YOU or GOD? Why?
2. How would you list the order of supremacy in your life?  
Eg. ME – FAMILY – MONEY – PLEASURE – GOD – FRIENDS.
3. Are there areas and ways you think you may have committed spiritual adultery?
4. Why is just having God somewhere in your life not enough?
5. Where is your heart? Where is your treasure?

6. James 4:6 – **But He gives greater grace!** Why is this so precious?
7. Why do we need to humble ourselves, repent, submit to God and order our lives daily?
8. Have you found yourself judging others for not meeting your needs? Why is this an issue?
9. What are your life goals/dreams? Do they line up with God's priorities?