

**“Leaving God Out”**  
**Or**  
**“Pride, Presumption, and Priorities”**  
**James 4: 11-5:6**

**Introduction:** This section of James deals with three major areas of danger in the life of the believer.

- 1. A Critical Spirit, 4:11-12 (Pride)**
- 2. A Casual Spirit, 4: 13-17 (Presumption)**
- 3. A Carnal Spirit, 5: 1-6 (Priorities)**

**I. A Critical Spirit, 4:11-12**

**-vs. 11, “Speak not evil of one another...” ( Literally, “To talk someone down...”)**

There appeared to be a superiority complex which contributed to a demeaning, critical spirit within the fellowship. This refers to unkind, destructive, habitual criticism. This is the love of fault-finding.

**-vss. 11-12, A Critical/Judgmental spirit disparages God’s Law, i.e., places that person above the Law. “You fight against God’s Law.” “You know as much as God.”**

**-vs. 12, “Who are you...?” (They had a “splinter and beam” faith).**

James is trying to correct that which can destroy the harmony and fellowship of the Body.

**II. A Casual Spirit, 4: 13-17**

This passage is not condemning honest work, careful planning, or well deserved gain. Rather it is a condemnation of the life lived without reference to God. It is to those who seek to be “the captains of their own ships.” This is the self-centered arrogance that plans life as though God did not exist. It is a form of “practical atheism.” Herein is a picture of a merchant planning their business.

**-vs. 13, “Come now, those of you who say...”** This is arrogance and presumption!

**-vs. 14, “Life is a vapor...”** Things change quickly. This is the frailty and transience of human existence. “Do not boast about tomorrow.”

**-vs. 15, “What you ought to say...”** “God willing...”

**-vs. 16, “You are rejoicing in your prideful achievements when you ought to be repenting...”** This is the pride of life.

**-vs. 17, “...to know to do good and not to do it, it is sin.”** These are the sins of omission!

**III. A Carnal Spirit, 5:1-6**

This is a continuation of the discussion of human arrogance and self-centeredness. The economic extremes of the extremely wealthy and the extremely poor contributed to a “caste” system in the church. James does not denounce wealth, but rather, man’s obsession with it. Apparently greed contributed to an attitude of casual concern for the needs of others. This records God’s condemnation of covetousness!

### **A. The Despair of Riches, vs. 1**

-vs. 1, **“Weep and howl...”** This is a picture of the crying out of the tortured. It is also a picture of impending judgment.

### **B. The Deficiency of Riches, vss. 2-3**

-vss. 2-3, **“Your fullness is rotted and your clothes are full of insects.”** Their hoarded wealth was ruined. Foodstuffs (grain)... rotted; garments...moth-eaten; gold and silver...corroded. **“You have heaped treasure together for the last days.”** Here is a picture of the impermanence of riches. A person’s wealth was often measured by their grain/foodstuffs, their clothes, and their money.

### **C. The Danger of Riches, vs. 3**

-**“They will rise up to be a witness against you.”**

-**“They shall make you miserable.”** (“...eat your flesh as it were fire...”)

### **D. The Deceitfulness of Riches, vss. 4-5**

-The rich had sent laborers into the fields to harvest the crops, but after they had worked hard the rich refused to pay them what they had promised. The love of money breaks down character. James describes fraud and ruthless greed.

-vs. 5, **“It has all been about you.”** Their hunger for luxury and self-indulgence with no regard for others had made their fat hearts ready for slaughter. This is a picture of a steer in a stockyard being fattened for slaughter.

### **E. The Destruction of Riches, vs.6**

-**“You have condemned and killed good men who had no power to defend themselves against you.”**

“Condemned” is a judicial word that speaks of those who would so control the courts that there would be no justice. In so doing, they have taken away the means of support and are killing that person as if they committed murder.”

### **Conclusion:**

Remember, there is nothing wrong with making money, but we must make it honestly. There is nothing wrong in having wealth, but we must use it unselfishly and wisely.

-Jesus said, **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also,”** Matthew 6: 19-21.