

## **“The Malady of “My Way” “**

**Or**

## **“Elvis Had it Wrong”**

### **James 4: 1-10**

**Introduction:** Elvis Presley will always be remembered for his song, “I Did it My Way”, but the truth is Elvis had it wrong! In today’s world there is an insatiable concern for/pre-occupation with, self, doing things “my way.” James asks, “What is causing the quarrels and fights among you?” Believers wanted “their way” so badly that tragic conflicts developed. The world’s systems fed, and feed, this self-centered focus on life.

The letter of James may be old but it is a timely word for us today. James 4:1-10 contains...

- 1. A Review of the Problem of “Self”**
- 2. A Rebuke for the Priority of “Self’**
- 3. A Remedy for the “Pollution of “Self”**

#### **I. A Review of the Problem of “Self”, (4:1-3)**

James uses questions, much as a physician would do, in seeking to diagnosis a problem. James has just talked about the blessedness of peace in the fellowship and now he is talking about “wars”.

##### **A. The Conflict, v.1**

-“Wars”- long, drawn-out conflicts. Chronic conflict. Continuous hostility.

-“Fightings”- Individual encounters

##### **B. The Cause of the Conflicts, vs. 1b-2**

-“Our Uncontrolled passions”- The desire, craving, for self-gratification, unbridled pleasure

-“You lust”

-“You kill”

-“You covet”

##### **C. The Curse of Conflict, v.3**

-Selfishness, the “Malady of Meism” not only ruins interpersonal relationships, but it also hurts and hinders a person’s relationship with God.

-Selfishness makes our praying ineffectual because we ask in the wrong way for all the wrong reasons.

## II. The Rebuke for the Priority of “Self”, (4:4-6)

James deals with this problem in a straightforward way!

### A. The Accusation of Adultery, v. 4a

James levels a “stunning” accusation against God’s people... **“Adultery”**, A picture of an unfaithful bride! The breaking of a contract!

### B. The Alliance With the World, v. 4b

-**“Friendship with the world...”**, a comfortable, convenient, carnal embracing of this world’s “system.”

- **“...an enemy of God...”**, There is no middle ground. This impossible alliance will never work.

- **v. 5, “Our God is a jealous God.”**, Note: This quote cannot be found. There is no biblical passage that we know of which is quoted here, but rather, as most conservative scholars think, a summary of the entirety of biblical truth.

- **v. 6, “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.”** This jealous God is also a gracious God!

## III. The Remedy for the Pollution of “Self”, (4:7-10)

James issues ten imperatives which call for submission to the Lordship of Christ.

### A. Resolve and Resist, v. 7

**1. Instead of submitting to our desires**, “submit yourselves to God.” This pictures a military submission, i.e., placing yourself under the orders of the Lord.

**2. “Resist the devil...”**, “To stand against... The promise is, “he will flee from you.” The choice is ours.

### B. Return and Repent, vs.8-9

**3. “Draw nigh unto God...”** This admonition is followed by a promise, **“and He will draw nigh unto you.”**

**4. “Cleanse your hands you sinners...”** The external manifestations of worldliness.

**5. “And purify your hearts, you double-minded.”** The internal. We must make up our minds...

**6. v. 9, "Be afflicted..."**, This is a call for godly sorrow and the desperation of repentance. A picture of an army which has run out of food and has no shelter.

**7. "...and mourn..."**, This is sincere grief over sin.

**8. "...and weep..."**, Remember Simon Peter? We need revival because of our "dry eyes."

**9. "Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness..."** This is a rebuke of a flippant attitude regarding spiritual things.

**10. v. 10, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."** There is a "higher" life! There is great blessing and benefit from submitting to God's will and way.

**May our testimony not be..."I did it my way", but rather, "I did it God's way."**

**PS**

**I think Elvis would agree!**