

Never Thirst Again - James 4:1-10

- **Scripture**

- **1** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?
- **2** You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.
- **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.
- **4** You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- **5** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?
- **6** But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
- **7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- **8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- **9** Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.
- **10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you

- **Background**

- The book of James, the half brother of Christ, is **very practical and targeted towards how we live, believers, live**. It is written to believers and it focuses not just **on external behavior but on the internal condition behind the behavior**. It is a book that is apt for us today where we live
 - Chapter 1 speaks of afflictions, asking for wisdom, faith, the descending staircase of desire that turns into death, a glimpse of the Father, the necessity of doing the Word...and this is just one chapter
 - Chapter 2 speaks of the sin of partiality, {which we so need today when we speak across races, political parties, sexual orientations, etc.} And then it concludes on how faith is best seen through your actions or lack thereof
 - In Chapter 3, James picks up on the tongue which really reveals what is going on in our hearts, and then concludes on earthly and godly wisdom and the worldviews they produce.

- What I want to point out though is that **interwoven within all the admonition of James isn't simply behavior modification**. Rather it is about **getting to the root of the issue**, which is **always an internal disposition of our heart. Really a poor sighting of God**
- Restating that, our sins and issues has only ever been about one thing - and that is **we want something else other than what God gives**.
- Our **focus today is on desires within the context** of James 4:1-10. Desires are **not in themselves bad**, not at all.
- In fact **desires are essential** across all walks of life. Throughout scripture we see a **theme for the right motivations, which includes desire, behind our thoughts and deeds**.
 - In 1 Tim 3:1, Paul says if anyone aspires (longs for) for the office of the elder - that is desire at play.
 - When the psalmist says **“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water,”** desire is at work here. And this is where the obsessive nature of the desire can be helpful

- There should be a longing between spouses and that highlights desire in the right context
- However, **today my focus is on desires that have a tendency to draw us away from God.** And quite frankly that is **any desire that is out of order. When desires become unrestrained, they can be very dangerous.**
- Consider James 1:13-15 to see how desires can set us on a downward spiral, away from God
 - 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.
 - 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.
 - 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death
- Generally, there are a couple ways we tend to deal with desire:
 - Give in to your desires - generally not a great idea because of our fallenness
 - Ignore desires - bad approach
 - Frustrate desires - bad approach

- **Subordinate desire to the greater good of the Kingdom of God.** When we do not do

something we desire, it is because we are **looking to something far much better!**

- **Subordinating our desires, whether good or bad,** to the greater good that God provides is **the theme of the message today.** Hold on to that thought with you as we journey along together

- **I want what I want, when I want it! (James 1:1-4)**

- In James 3:13-18, James deals specifically with two types of wisdom but his aim is more on the fruit produced by the different types of wisdom. Peace is a fruit of godly wisdom and this provides a great segue into chapter 4 where James deals with the absence of this peace - namely what causes quarrels and fights amongst you.

- **1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?**

- The word passion here means 'pleasure', but it often carries the negative connotations of sinful, self-indulgent pleasure (we get our word 'hedonism' from it)
- The root word for desire here as well as in James 4:1-10 is Epithumia and it translates into **strong or inordinate longing**, which can **sometimes express itself in a subtle manner.**

- For example I can nurture a strong longing in my heart for respect, acknowledgement, status, etc., but I might say all the right things outwardly.

- If we are to become who God intends us to be, then our desires have to be transformed. This is

why Romans 12:2 says:

- Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

You do not have, because you do not ask.

- Verse 2 speaks to the **obsessive nature of desires. Desire is simply about itself and it doesn't consider what is better or perhaps best.** The selfishness of unrestrained desire means **I would take what I want if I could.** Unrestrained desire is simply too focused on itself for any other thing to matter.

- Looking at ourselves, I am certain there are times we simply wished someone was out of the picture, or better still something magically incapacitates them. This is not too far off from murder

- I love how James helps us **locate our problem in the statement you do not have because you do not ask**. Note that the point **isn't merely that we do not ask but that we do not fully entrust ourselves into the hands of God**. We might say a prayer or try to trust God but at the first sighting of an issue, we generate our own plans. In a sense, **we are simply too self reliant**.
- We have a desire and seek to fulfill it ourselves. **We do not seriously consider if this is what God would want for us** or what His will is for us
 - I do not mean for every situation, there will be a direct and applicable answer in scriptures because there isn't and this is where wisdom is profitable to direct.
 - Wisdom is knowing the right thing to do in the 80% of life situations in which moral rules don't provide clear answers - and if you have two job opportunities before you, you don't get an answer from scripture on which job to choose
 - However if you have a growing and intimate relationship with God, you will consider your heart dispositions and motivation per each job, the time commitment away from family, away from God. You will look at how the job might change you - will it be more for the glory of God or my own need for recognition or financial security?
 - What I have done with that example is to take principles from scripture and apply it

- We strive to fulfill our desires, and when we cannot reach them, the **frustrated desire begins to breed the strife and angst** that James describes in chapter 3 vs 16
 - We are in essence **functional atheist** as we only invite God into certain categories of our lives **forgetting that He is always there with us**
 - **Either we do not like the idea of not being enough or we do not trust God enough, so we bend inward rather than look upwards to God.**
- **3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**
 - I find it interesting to often **weigh my prayers against what will God want?**
 - What I mean is that **I try to lay aside whatever is motivating me and truly check the merits of my request, noting the inflections of my heart.** Sometimes, I end up laughing at my prayers for I see my motivations for what they are.
 - Personal example - There was a time when I was looking to move away from California via any means necessary and I earnestly prayed for it. **The truth though was I wasn't considering what God might want. I simply wanted to run from certain hurts I had encountered.**
 - With this example you see how I am asking wrongly to spend it on my passions

- When we pray and we mention the name of Jesus, it should be a check in our hearts.

The check is this - **whatever I am desiring/asking for, is it really in alignment with what**

God would want for me? Is this really about giving him glory? Am I more **after his glory**

than the glory of my desires - marriage, career achievements, financial security,

spiritual maturity, etc?

- This is what it means to pray in the name of Jesus or ask in his name. It means we ask for his glory, for his purpose and with his resources.
- Check your heart and motivations per your requests to God. Is your request motivated by unrestrained desires or desires that are out of bounds?
- Let prayer be a place where you get to be vulnerable with God. Be **willing to give up your desires and submit them to the greater good that God gives**. What is that good?

- God loves you and has called you to be transformed into the image of His Son. God sees so much value in you that he calls you to partner with him and he offers you salvation by grace through faith. Both the grace and faith are free gifts.

- Meditate on **Isa 43:1-7, Matt 6:19-34, Rev 3:14-22** to get a glimpse of what God sees as being good and his love for you

- It would **not be loving for God to simply say yes to all your prayers** for your sight is limited and his isn't. He sees **that which will reverberate in the halls of eternity**, that which **will ultimately doom or lift you up. And so because of this, he allows that which he hates to accomplish what he loves in you.** This is why we have Romans 8:28-30

- **4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?**

Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- The relationship between God and his people is often portrayed with **marital imagery** where **God has graciously elected us** by bringing us into a covenant relationship with him. And this was accomplished **by a gift of blood, the blood of Christ on Calvary.**
- The charge **“you adulterous people”** applies to every one of us, and it is humbling.
- **“Friendship with the world”** means we align ourselves with the values systems, mindsets, perspectives that are set against God. **It means we long for something other than what God has provided.** And who **can really claim they are innocent? This is why we are all the adulterous ones.**

- And we don't even have to take action on it, the moment, we begin to long for something "other" than God, we are aligning ourselves with the world and thereby making an enemy of God. What matters here is the disposition of our hearts rather than a particular action.
- Therefore our dalliance with any other person or thing is adultery. James is using the same imagery to show the gravity of this issue, **where we have the potential of making our desires our idols.**
- As **unrestrained desires take control of our lives, we define ourselves by the following**
 - **What people are saying about me**, which really points to our desire to be **accepted and to have a certain kind of reputation.**
 - When being accepted or the push for a certain reputation makes you compromise on what you know is right, you are under the influence of desires going out of bounds.
 - **What I have accomplished or amassed**, which really points to my desire for a certain societal or intellectual status
 - **What I am currently doing or engaged with**, which points to my need for significance or recognition

- It's not that the audience this was addressed to **were overtly rejecting God and consciously choosing to follow the world**. However **unrestrained desire, due to its obsessive nature, will have no other king but itself**
- It isn't that God has declared us as enemies, **it is that we have declared God as our enemy when we treat our desires as God should be treated**.
- Here I want to ask a question: **how much of your sins are tied to unrestrained desires?**
 - Do you see that most if not all of our sins come **back to desires out of bounds**, hence **wherever there is selfish ambition and jealousy (which has desires at their core), there is all manner of evil (James 3:16)**

- **The Wine that never runs out...Grace Abounds (James 1:5-6)**

- **5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?**

- Verse 5 goes on to describe what we sometimes call the jealousy of God. However I want to be clear. **God is never jealous of you**. If you think God is jealous of you, slow your down. Recall that we are speaking here about the Supreme and Sovereign King of Kings. God is not jealous of you.

- However **God is jealous for you**. He sees the doom you are headed for and **out of his love, he runs after you**. For example, a father that sees his toddler heading for a ditch, makes a beeline to save his toddler, and we conclude that this father is jealous for his toddler's safety. Such is God's jealousy for our good. I hope you are seeing the extent God goes to for you. I sincerely hope you are seeing the tangibility of his love for you.
- In spite of **our near constant adultery**, if you are anything like me, you would think that God will **respond with punishment and justice!** We are deserving of wrath, the kind we cannot even begin to comprehend.
- **Yet, this all powerful God responds with grace (verse 6a)...Is this for real? God responds with grace????** In the face of our near constant rejections, one who is by himself self sustaining, runs after us?
- **Being all knowing, he knows we will reject him repeatedly yet he would give his own son to live the life we should live and die the death we deserve? While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.**

- If Christ would die for you while you had no inclining of who He is or what He has done, do you see that **NOTHING** can separate you from his love. There is no sin that is too depraved, there is no distance that is too far away from God. There is no situation that is beyond his understanding.
- **God loves you! God loves you, yes you!** He wants what is BEST for you and in the face of your betrayal and adultery, he responds with grace. **Please do not ever think you are unlovable. Any voice that whispers to you in any form is of the devil. Those whispers aim at separating you from God for the enemy knows the incomprehensible joy that awaits you if you respond to God's gracious invitation**
 - A word about Grace. Grace is unmerited favor, but it is also much more than that. **Grace is God coming to help you do what you cannot by yourself do.**
 - **Grace is NEVER opposed to effort, however it is opposed to earning.** Earning is an attitude, Effort is action. I highlight this because later on, you will see that **there is a dimension to our walk with God which requires us to act.**
- **6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."**
- **And here is the turning point in our story. He repays our unfaithfulness with faithfulness. He repays our adultery with an all consuming love**

- The grace God offers is the grace of humility, the grace of those who would humbly submit themselves to God. **It is the humble who see their depravity and desperate need for God.**

- **But why does God choose this way of humility? To answer that question, It might be better to show**

why God hates pride

- Prov 3:34, Prov 6:16-17, Proverbs 8:13, Prov 16:5, Isa 61:1, Zeph 3:11-12, 1 Peter 5:5-9
- Pride is a real and intent filled preference for my way or any other way above God's way
- **At its core, Pride is idolatry and it will destroy you. Why do I say so? Because it blindfolds you to your need for God. It hinders you from seeing just how crippled you are, and therefore you never truly put yourself in a place to receive from God**
- Pride grooms you to rely on yourself
- **Pride prevents you from receiving what God has given freely because you don't think you can have what you didn't work for - and this is a form of false humility**
- **Pride is having this view of owed-ness and rather than seeing everything in life as a gift**
- **Pride is avoiding acknowledging your incapacities and inadequacies because admitting them necessitates your submission to the One in control**

- Pride can show itself when things are great through - self exaltation, self-promotion, and self justification
- It can also show itself when things aren't too rosy via self degradation, self demotion, self condemnation
- **Pride is saying God's way isn't good enough so I have to find my own way or make something happen. So pride can show up in the form of worry**
- Pride opposes and dishonors the might of God as we lift ourselves (self sufficiency) beside it or against it. We do not want to experience going down. We do not like the idea of being on crutches
- On the other hand, **humility knows its limitations** and so it **casts its cares upon God...**
 - Do you see that our bending inwards to figure out things by ourselves can be a form of pride?
- **It is those who accept their need for Christ that have any hope of not being overrun by unsatisfied desires. It is those who see themselves as the sick - the desperadoes that grasp the truth that making themselves the ultimate reference point per their desires is a horrible idea.**
 - Why? Simply because we are broken - and you can expand that to include the fact that we are short-sighted, finite, fallible, and unwise.

- **Those who accept the grace of God now have a place to stand so as to distinguish between their desires and what is good, and perhaps what is best.**
 - These are the ones that, due to being crippled, understand they need a savior and so they dive into God.
- **These are the ones who come to wrestle with the upside down Kingdom of God. They are hungry and thirsty so they go to Christ and he says**
 - "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.
 - **This is the wine that never runs out! Jesus is that wine**
- You do not deal with your desires by ignoring them or frustrating them, not at all. **The most healthy and best way to deal with your desires is to subject them to the greater good of the Kingdom of God.**
- In practical terms,
 - **Rather than give in to the desire to withdraw and not be bothered by the plight of others across any divide (whether it be racial or gender or sexual orientation), we come to see in everyone the image of God and so we labor to point them to God**

- Rather than my desire to dominate another human being, I see the greater good of serving so that they might know Christ
- **Rather than give in to lust, greed, jealousy, pride, etc., I am so consumed by his ways that I choose love over lust, contentment over greed, humility over pride for I know that my identity is that of a beloved child of the Almighty. So I have no need to prove anything**
- Rather than the promises of sin, I see the greater good in the gift that God gives. And what is the greatest gift that God gives? God gives God
- **Rather than my desire to hurt and be vengeful, I see the greater good that says hurt people, hurt other people and God desires that all be saved.**
 - **So my aim then becomes pointing those who hurt me to God, and in that process I come to see the embers of moral superiority and self righteousness festering within me**
- **Rather than the desire to be heralded and acknowledged, I come to see my identity as a beloved little child of God. Furthermore, I see that such an identity is iron clad and forever secure. I do not need to perform for God to be accepted, I am already his from eternity past. I know where I will be in eternity future.**

- **Rather than the desire to quickly exit a season of suffering, I am more attentive to what God is pruning in me**
- **Rather than the desire to bend inwards and be self sufficient, I take on the mantle of a self humbling and Christ exalting faith that leads me to look upwards to God**
- **Rather than seeing any longing, say marriage or having kids or purchasing a home, as a long awaited promise land, I come to see God as the true promise land, an eternal dwelling place.**
- **Rather than giving in to vanities of social media or filling the hole in my heart with whatever appeals to me, I come to deeply understand that I will forever be restless until I find my rest in him.**
- **Rather than my desire to look out for myself and my family and be so focused on me, I come to see that God's provision is evermore abundant and He will provide and take care of me and my family.**
- **How then do I become the one who never thirst again because I have been satisfied by the living waters? In essence, how do I become the humble, the desperadoes chasing after God?**
- **The answer to that question lies in our text. At the very least, our text gives us the foundation to that answer.**

- Instinctively, I believe you understand this will always be a process, and a lifelong process at that.

- **Never Thirst Again (James 1:7-10)**
 - **7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

 - **8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

 - **9** Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

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

- Notice that verse 7 and 10 are quite similar and there is a call to submit oneself to God. Between these verses are some interesting directives on subjecting our desires to the greater good of the Kingdom of God

- **So how do we become people that are not overrun by desires? How do we become people who can choose what is good over the obsessiveness of desire**

- **Submit to God**

- **This is the discipline of abandoning yourself to God.** And why would you want to do that?

Simply because biblical logic teaches us that **past faithfulness of God ensures present and future faithfulness.**

- **This is the character of God and this is one of the central themes in scriptures.** The faithfulness of God to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the children of Israel shows the character of God, the apostles, **shows that He is trustworthy and you can rely on him**

- But how can you know this without knowing him? And how can you know him of whom you have not heard?

- **There can be no submission without knowing the One to whom you are submitting... and this necessitates getting into the Word of God, meditating on the Word of God**

- I am speaking of the discipline of feasting on the Word of God often. **The Word of God must become priority in your life, the way air is to your lungs**

- **Without the Word of God, you won't know your identity and without that, you won't have a place to stand against unrestrained and unfulfilled desires**

- Call Peter's name and speak to his name being part of him, and that happens to be so because of the consistency of hearing that name being associated with him

- The way we get truths into ourselves is to meditate on them - I mean to think on them, to look at it from different cuts and angles

- As you get more into his word, **you becoming more discerning and so you can resist the enemy and his machinations.** It is submitting to God that gives you a place to stand to resist the enemy.

- And you have to resist him - this is the bit of grace not being opposed to effort, which is action.

- You resist him avoiding your sin tendencies and lifting it up to God.

- You resist the enemy by avoid temptation - which is the scenario that leads to sin. Y

- ou resist him by countering his whispers with the Word of God.

- You resist the enemy by rejecting half lies and half truths.

- You resist the enemy by paying attention to what doctrines you assimilate.

- The necessity of you resisting is that it builds you up. **It makes you wiser. This is how you subordinate your desire to the greater good that God gives.** This is the learning space between the not yet and already there. **This is the space between the redemption and consummation**

- **Draw Near to God**

- **Drawing near means we are serious about pursuing God.** It is God's prevenient grace that makes us see our need for Him. It is his grace that gives us the desire to draw near to him. And we respond to that by drawing near to him

- We pursue God by having a relationship with him. **Carve out time to God. Invest more and more in this relationship with God.**

- **Rather than buy that shoe or bag or sports ticket, sometimes, buy a book or commentaries that help you dig more into the Word**

- How do we pursue him who we do not know? Are you seeing the imperative of the Word of God. And please note that the letter kills, it is the Spirit that gives life, so we need both the Word and the Spirit

- **We pursue God by being in community...we need each other. Do not run this race alone. Make a commitment to find trusted friends/mentors you can grow with.**

- **We are Serious about Sin**

- We pursue God by repenting of our sins. We cannot repent of our sins if we do not see anything wrong... are you seeing the necessity of that grace of humility? **The discipline of owning up to our sins helps keep our pride in check**

- We cannot draw near to God without repentance. **What is required is both the external cleansing of our hands, and the internal purification of our hearts. The use of hands and heart denotes deed and disposition of the heart.** The Psalter speaks of those who will stand before God as requiring clean hands and a pure heart from Psalm 24:3-4
 - Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.
- **The double mindedness here harkens back to Christians who seek to be friends with this world - we are playing both sides as our desires run amok.**
 - **When our desires are uncontrollable, we are drawn away from single minded devotion to God. We become people with divided loyalties, people who are unstable.**
- And a primary weapon the enemy leverages is the obsessiveness of desire. Unrestrained desire makes it seem like you cannot do without the object of your desire, which isn't true.
- Unrestrained desires have a way of fueling our pride because it makes us reject God's ways. The more we are separated from God, due to pride, we become more obsessed with our desires, which further fuels our pride, and we keep going in that downward spiral.

- **When we are serious about sin, we become more inclined to watch the subtle movements and motivations of our hearts. This is the discipline of reflection. We become people that are watchful of what is going on within us. We examine ourselves to see if we be of the faith.**

- **Superficiality or triviality is the curse of our age. Levity is our drug of choice. We are so wrapped up in what makes us feel good and what fits our little, narrow minded world.**
 - **What makes me feel good becomes the compass of my decisions. We generally have no inclining of the Holiness of God.**

- **It isn't that we have strong desires, we have silly, weak desires that if we had the foresight of God, we would weep for ourselves.**

- James calls us to be awakened to the coming wrath and so he uses strong prophetic language that his hearers would have recognized. This is why James says
 - **Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom**

- Here's a commentary on this verse that I love
 - **James is no killjoy, denying any place for laughter and joy in the Christian life. But 'laughter' in the Old Testament and Judaism is often the scornful laughter of the fool**

(Eccl. 7:6; Eccles. 27:13) who blithely refuses to take sin seriously. It is the mark of the one who prospers in this world, without regard to the world to come.

- For this reason Jesus warned: 'Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep' (Luke 6:25b). What men will do when God's judgment overtakes them can be avoided if they mourn and weep for sin now. Jesus also said: 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted' (Matt. 5:4).
- Many people in our day, both outside the church and within it, are marked by a superficial joy and brittle laughter. They live the hedonist philosophy, 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die', that ignores the terrifying reality of God's judgment.
- But even the committed Christian can slip into a casual attitude towards sin, perhaps presuming too much on God's forgiving and merciful nature. It is to all such people that James issues his plea for a radical, thoroughgoing repentance. Only such repentance can produce true Christian joy – the joy that overflows from the consciousness of sins forgiven.

- **I hope you see in that statement, the continuity of having a broken and contrite heart. I hope you see the radical call to a deep heartfelt sorrow for our sins.**

- And so verse 10 summarizes all we have been saying - humble yourselves before the Lord (by aligning yourself to all we have highlighted today) and God will exalt you - He will bring to pass that greater good of His Kingdom in your life
- As you lose your life for his sake, meaning that your desires are not the ultimate reference point, you will truly begin to live in this inverted reality we call the Kingdom of God, where God's will is truly done.
- ...
- ...

- **Conclusion**

- Please do not hear me paint a picture of self denial (with respect to desires) as self rejection...NOT at all. Laying down our desires is not to be seen as a painful, strenuous act, perhaps repeated from time to time against great internal resistance. Rather, it is an overall condition of life in the Kingdom of God, exemplified by the parable of the kingdom - Matt 13:44
- Following the context of this parable, imagine you discover an abundance of gold or oil in a field and no one else knows of it. Can you see yourself as being sad and deprived for having to sell all you have to purchase this property?

- Hardly! Now you know what it's like to deny yourself, and subject your desires to the greater good of the Kingdom of God
- Some pain is included, no doubt because of old attachments but as we proceed on this path, the new view we have takes on greater reality and pushes away the old attachments - which we are then NOT sad to see go. In fact we are happy to see them go
- We come to NOT want or think of what we used to crave after
- So the self denial is always the surrender of a lesser, dying self for a greater eternal one
- ...
- ...

- **New Year, New me**

- It's a new year, there is this usually this sense of a clean slate, this bubbling energy and the optimism that the new year is going to be different....new year new me...you see me start getting to church 30 minutes early.
- I have new goals and new dreams...but it's about 3 weeks in and how many have already come to an end...the wine does run out eh...Behavior modification and gritting of your teeth only carries you so far, especially in this walk of faith.

- Sustained change comes only via the power of the Holy Spirit and it is always internal first...For there to be sustained change we must come to acknowledge ourselves as we are....not as we long to be but as we are. This acknowledgement helps us see that we are truly in need of Christ. We are the crippled that needs the crutches of the Cross of Christ. We need God's help! We are the sick in need of a Savior
- If there is one thing I can commend you to do in this new year, please In this new year, seek God with all your heart...if there is only one thing you do, let it be forging a more intimate and humbling walk with God
- The last statement in chapter 3 speaks of peace and right into chapter 4 James wants to show what hinders peace
- Today I want to present before you a way of dealing with desires that is of anti-God and a way that God prescribes. My charge to you today is that you choose life above death. Choose God above what makes you comfortable. Choose God above the compulsive nature of desire.
 - As the surest source of destruction to men is to obey themselves, so the only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, than to follow the Lord wherever he leads - John Calvin

