

HEDONISTIC REVERSIONISM

In our lesson text, James opens with two questions (Jas.4:1) and gives the source of the problem in the second question.

James used the special Greek word (hedone) [pleasure] (Jas.4:1, 3) (NASB) as the source of the problem in the Christian way of life.

Then he lays out how hedonistic reversionism affects the Christian way of life in (Jas.4:1 -4).

Note the sequence of **YOU (2pl)** is used in the English translation 13 times.

Question: Who does hedonistic reversionism affect the MOST?

James is writing to Jewish believers “dispersed abroad (Gentile nations)” (Jas.1:1). Hedone would be a familiar term among Greeks (Socrates, Cyreneans, and Epicureans philosophy).

<p>This lesson will study <u>three aspects</u> of Hedonistic Reversionism.</p>

1. Hedonism is the pursuit of worldly pleasure as the ultimate good of life. It is the frantic search for happiness from the world system of cosmos diabolicus (1 John 5:19-20).

James is warning Jewish believers who have joined themselves to the Greek culture where one of their major philosophies is hedonism – “Eat, drink, be merry, and die” is philosophy of hedonism (Luke 12:19-23; 15:28-32/ contrast).

2. James connects the Greek word Epithumia with hedonism (Jas.4:2) (You lust and have not).

This is a lust whose source is your Old Sin Nature (Jas.1:14-15; Gal.5:16-17; Rom.13:14).

Paul connected them in (Titus 3:3-5)

(Titus 3:3) “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, **enslaved to various lusts (epithumia) and pleasures (hedone)**, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”

We learn from the prodigal son that hedonistic reversionism squanders divine blessings on hedonistic pleasures of the world (Luke 15:12-14, 30).

It opposes everything sacred of God. But the prodigal son reminds us that there is always hope in God for spiritual restoration (1 John 1:9).

(2 Thess.2:16-17) “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and **good hope by grace**, comfort and strengthen your hearts in **every good work and word.**”

3. Satan is the master counterfeiter of truth of God.

Like God he puts a high value of friendship (2 Cor.11:4-15).

James introduced **friendship with God** with Abraham and Rahab (Jas.2:18-26). What they have in common is spiritual growth grace status of divine production. “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,’ and he was called **the friend of God.**” (Jas.2:23) (Gen.15:6; 2 Chron.20:7; Isa.41:8)

James introduces the devil’s copy-cat version of friendship.

(Jas.4:4) “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility towards God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

One example already mentioned was the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:12-16, 30)

What happened to cause a dramatic change?

- (Lk.15:17) He came to senses
- (Lk.15:21-24) He confessed his sin and returned to fellowship with God

(Lk.15:32) emphasized his return to fellowship with God, not his leaving the Father and fellowship with the world. To do so would be a dog returning to his vomit! (2 Pet.2:17-22).

(Rom.12:2) “**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**”

Once the hedonistic prodigal (Lk.15:11-21) returned home, the focus was completely upon the grace of God focused upon a repentant son. (metanoia) [a change of philosophy of life] (Lk.15:22-32).