

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

BITTER JEALOUSY

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART THIRTY SEVEN OF SIXTY FOUR*

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed" (James 3:13-16).

The word "jealousy" describes the attitude of discontent, vindictiveness, and malicious ill-will toward another because of a real or imagined rivalry. Jealousy produces feelings of anger and hatred. A work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), it grows from self-assertion and the desire to glory over others. James describes it as "bitter" jealousy and states the location of the feeling as being "in your heart."

The heart of man is his faculty for thinking, willing, reasoning, etc. If a man has bitter jealousy in his heart, it will produce "every vile deed." That which comes from a heart filled with bitter jealousy will be malignant and worthless. The opposite of such feelings is demonstrated by a "good life" and "works in meekness of wisdom." Bitter jealousy joins with "faction" or "selfish ambition." These can be seen hand-in-hand in life.

James addresses himself to "the wise" among Christians, probably referring to the teachers. When teachers of God's Word allow bitter jealousy to cloud their vision, much evil follows. Their ambition is to create a party for their own pride while destroying any who might rival them. We have met preachers who can say nothing good about most other preachers they have known. They may pride themselves on their knowledge, but such is not from God but from the devil. I have long since learned that the preacher who tells me about the evils (real or imagined) of others, will tell others of my evils. Such an attitude is not less common or destructive among non-preaching brethren. The inevitable consequences of jealousy and ambition are the things most opposed to God's ways. The result is confusion, but God is a God of peace (I Corinthians 14:33).

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