

THE BEREAN

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

YE KILL AND COVET

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART FORTY ONE OF SIXTY FOUR*

"Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures" (James 4:1-3). While these words are to be figuratively applied to the internal struggles in the church, they are just as applicable to the carnal wars of men.

All about us is fighting, war, killing, and unhappiness in general. Why, and what can we do about it? Some would suggest the solution is found in giving everyone the right to do as he pleases. Another says the removal of poverty will correct evil. Some claim that political self-determination is the solution. All of these are doomed to failure as they overlook one big factor in the strife of men. That is lust. Man's inordinate, uncontrolled desires lead to unhappiness and strife. No legitimate activity can satisfy evil desires. They can be fulfilled only by doing evil. If we found it possible to let every person satisfy his basic needs, we would not remove evil because men still have evil desires. They would still kill and covet. Will Durant

described the Aryans who conquered India as wanting "land, and pasture for their cattle; their word for war said nothing about national honor, but simply meant 'a desire for more cattle'." (Our Oriental Heritage, p. 397).

We don't like to admit that we have evil desires or that they cause our difficulties. We seek a way to have peace without making changes so we won't have to admit them. Although such efforts will fail, we find it easy to believe in them because we refuse to admit our covetousness and lust. The key to peace is to change the hearts of men. Man must be made to admit that his hedonistic lusts cause trouble. One who lives to satisfy his desires and pleasures will never be satisfied. The more he gets, the more he wants. Indulgence leads to being unsatisfied.

What men must do to have peace within themselves and among themselves is to accept Jesus, the Prince of Peace. This requires denying self (Mark 8:34). Self is the barrier to peace. The golden rule is the answer to mankind's woes. When men quit lusting and coveting, they quit fighting and killing. Men must purify their hearts and desires by faith and obedience to Christ (I Peter 1:22).

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