

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text "Call to Worship" is overlaid in a large, bold, black font, and "Psalm 51" is overlaid below it in a smaller, bold, black font.

Call to Worship

Psalm 51

Psalm 51:1-5 To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. **Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,** so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, **I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

Psalm 51:6-13 Behold, **you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.** Cast me not away from your presence, and **take not your Holy Spirit from me.** **Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Psalm 51:14-19 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O **God of my salvation**, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, **open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise**. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Do good to Zion **in your good pleasure**; build up the walls of Jerusalem; then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.



Praise and Prayer Request

All Prayer request can be e-mail to:

plbiblechurch@gmail.com

***We would love to pray for God's will to be done
your life and for His Name to be glorified in and
through you, as you seek His Holy Face!***

Receiving of the Offering



**An offering for the Church can be mailed to:
Promise Land Bible Church
PO Box 1437
Mountain Home, AR 72653**

Famous Quote:

“The study of the Book of Job and its comparison with the latest scientific discoveries has brought me to the matured conviction that the Bible is an inspired book and was written by the One who made the stars.”

Charles Burckhalter, Chabot Observatory



Today's Message

“Draw Near to God”

Scripture text: James 4:1-12

James 4:5-10 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"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, **"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.**

Luke 21:8-13 And he said, "**See that you are not led astray**. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, '**The time is at hand!**' Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, **do not be terrified**, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places **famines** and **pestilences**. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this **they will lay their hands on you and persecute you**, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. **This will be your opportunity to bear witness.**

Have you ever heard of “The War of the Whiskers” or “The War of the Oaken Bucket”? How about “The War of Jenkins’ Ear”? These were actual wars fought between nations, and you can read about them in most history books.

War is a fact of life, in spite of treaties, world peace organizations, and the threat of atomic bombs. Not only are there wars between nations, but there are wars of one kind or another on almost every level of life—even “gas wars” among filling station operators! James discussed this important theme of war in this paragraph, and he explained that there are three wars going on in the world. He also told how these wars could be stopped.

At War with Each Other (James 4:1a, 11–12)

“What causes fights and quarrels among you?”

Among Christians! “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps. 133:1).

Surely brethren should live together in love and harmony, yet often they do not. Lot caused a quarrel with his Uncle Abraham (Gen. 13). Absalom created a war for his father David (2 Sam. 13–18). Even the disciples created problems for the Lord when they argued over who was the greatest in the kingdom (Luke 9:46–48).

When you examine some of the early churches, you discover that they had their share of disagreements. The members of the Corinthian church were competing with each other in the public meetings, and even suing each other in court (1 Cor. 6:1–8; 14:23–40).

The Galatian believers were “biting and devouring” one another (Gal. 5:15). Paul had to admonish the Ephesians to cultivate spiritual unity (Eph. 4:1–16); and even his beloved church at Philippi had problems: two women could not get along with each other (Phil. 4:1–3).

1 Corinthians 6:1-4 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or **do you not know that the saints will judge the world?** And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? **Do you not know that we are to judge angels?** How much more, then, matters **pertaining to this life!** So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?

1 Corinthians 6:5-8 I say this to your shame.
Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and **that before unbelievers?** To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud--**even your own brothers!**

1 Corinthians 14:26-33a What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. **Let all things be done for building up.** If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and **each in turn,** and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, **let each of them keep silent in church** and speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and **let the others weigh what is said.** If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy **one by one,** so that **all may learn and all be encouraged,** and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. **For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.**

Galatians 5:10-15 I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, **why am I still being persecuted?** In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves! For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another**. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Ephesians 4:1-7 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, **urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

Ephesians 4:11-16 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may **no longer be children**, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, **into Christ**, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Philippians 4:1-3 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I **entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.** Yes, I ask you also, true companion, **help these women**, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

James mentioned several different kinds of disagreements among the saints.

Class wars (James 2:1–9). Here is that age-long rivalry between the rich and the poor. The rich man gets the attention, the poor man is ignored. The rich man is honored, the poor man is disgraced. How tragic it is when local churches get their values confused and cater to the rich while they ignore, or even reject, the poor. If fellowship in a church depends on such external things as clothing and economic status, **then the church is out of the will of God.**

Employment wars (James 5:1–6). Again, it is the rich man who has the power to control and hurt the poor man. Laborers do not get their wages, or they do not get their fair wages. In spite of our modern labor movement and federal legislation, there are still many people who cannot get a good job, or whose income is less than adequate for the work they are doing.

Church fights (James 1:19–20; 3:13–18). Apparently, the believers James wrote to were at war with each other over positions in the church, many of them wanting to be teachers and leaders. When they studied the Word, the result was not edification, but strife and arguments. Each person thought that his ideas were the only right ideas and his ways the only right ways. **Selfish ambition ruled their meetings, not spiritual submission.**

Personal wars (4:11–12). The saints **were speaking evil of one another and judging one another.** Here, again, we see the wrong use of the tongue. Christians are to speak **“the truth in love”** (Eph. 4:15); they are not to speak evil in a spirit of rivalry and criticism. If the truth about a brother is harmful, then we should **cover it in love and not repeat it** (1 Peter 4:8). If he has sinned, we should go to him personally and try to win him back (Matt. 18:15–19; Gal. 6:1–2).

James was not forbidding us to use discrimination or even to evaluate people. **Christians need to have discernment** (Phil. 1:9–10), but they must not act like God in passing judgment.

We must first examine our own lives, and then try to help others (Matt. 7:1–5). We never know all the facts in a case, and we certainly never know the motives that are at work in men's hearts. To speak evil of a brother and to judge a brother on the basis of partial evidence and (probably) unkind motives **is to sin against him and against God.** We are not called to be judges; God is the only Judge. He is patient and understanding; **His judgments are just and holy; we can leave the matter with Him.**

It is unfortunate that the saints are at war with each other, leader against leader, church against church, fellowship against fellowship.

The world watches these religious wars and says, **“Behold, how they hate one another!”** No wonder Jesus prayed, ***John 17:21** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

But, **why are we at war with one another?** We belong to the same family; we trust the same Savior; we are indwelt by the same Holy Spirit—and **yet we fight one another. Why?**

James answered this question by explaining the second war that is going on.

At War with Ourselves (James 4:1b–3)

James 4:1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? **The war in the heart is helping to cause the wars in the church!** *“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ... For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”* (James 3:14, 16).

The essence of sin is selfishness. Eve disobeyed God because she wanted to eat of the tree and become wise like God. Abraham lied about his wife because he selfishly wanted to save his own life (Gen. 12:10–20). Achan caused defeat to Israel because he selfishly took some forbidden loot from the ruins of Jericho (Josh. 7).

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Often we veil our religious quarrels under the disguise of “**spirituality**.” We are like Miriam and Aaron who complained about Moses’ wife, but who really were envious of Moses’ authority (Num. 12). Or we imitate James and John who asked for special thrones in the kingdom, when what we really want is **recognition today** (Mark 10:35–45). In both of these instances, the result of selfish desire was chastening and division among God’s people. **Miriam’s sin halted the progress of Israel for a whole week!**

Selfish desires are dangerous things. They lead to wrong actions (“ye kill, ye fight and war,” James 4:2), and they even lead to wrong praying (“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures,” James 4:3). **When our praying is wrong, our whole Christian life is wrong. It has well been said that the purpose of prayer is not to get man’s will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth.**

“Thou shalt not covet” is the last of God’s Ten Commandments, but its violation can make us break all of the other nine! Covetousness can make a person murder, tell lies, dishonor his parents, commit adultery, and in one way or another violate all of God’s moral law. **Selfish living and selfish praying always lead to war.** If there is war on the inside, there will ultimately be war on the outside.

People who are at war with themselves because of selfish desires are always unhappy people. They never enjoy life. Instead of being thankful for the blessings they do have, they complain about the blessings they do not have. They cannot get along with other people because they are always envying others for what they have and do. They are always looking for that “magic something” that will change their lives, when the real problem is within their own hearts.

Sometimes we use prayer as a cloak to hide our true desires. “But I prayed about it!” can be one of the biggest excuses a Christian can use. Instead of seeking God’s will, we tell God what He is supposed to do; and we get angry at Him if He does not obey.

This anger at God eventually spills over and we get angry at God's people. More than one church split has been caused by saints who take out their frustrations with God on the members of the church. Many a church or family problem would be solved if people would only look into their own hearts and see the battles raging there.

God made us a unity; mind, emotions, and will should work together. James stated the reason we are at war with ourselves and, consequently, with each other.

At War with God (James 4:4–10)

The root cause of every war, internal and external, is **rebellion against God**. At the beginning of Creation, you behold perfect harmony; but sin came into the world, and **this led to conflict**. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), and **lawlessness is rebellion against God**.

How does a believer declare war against God? **By being friendly with God's enemies**. James names three enemies that we must not fraternize with if we want to be at peace with God.

Here, then, are three enemies that want to turn us away from God: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

These enemies are left over from our old life of sin (Eph. 2:1–3). Christ has delivered us from them, but **they still attack us**. How can we overcome them? How can we be the friends of God and the enemies of the world, the flesh, and the devil?

James gives us three instructions to follow if we would enjoy peace instead of war.

Submit to God (v. 7). This word is a military term that means “**get into your proper rank.**” When a buck private acts like the general, there is going to be trouble! Unconditional surrender is the only way to complete victory. If there is any area of the life kept back from God, there will always be battles. **This explains why uncommitted Christians cannot live with themselves or with other people.**

“Neither give place to the devil,” cautions Paul in Ephesians 4:27. Satan needs a foothold in our lives if he is going to fight against God; and we give him that foothold.

The way to resist the devil is to submit to God.

After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and killed her husband, he hid his sins for almost a year. **There was war between him and God, and David had declared it.** Read Psalms 32 and 51 to discover the high price David paid to be at war with God.

When he finally submitted to God, David experienced peace and joy. This too he recorded in Psalms 32 and 51. **Submission is an act of the will; it is saying, “Not my will but Thine be done.”**

Draw near to God (v. 8). How do we do this? By confessing our sins and asking for His cleansing. “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.” The Greek word translated purify means “**make chaste.**” This parallels the idea of “spiritual adultery” in James 4:4.

Dr. A.W. Tozer has a profound essay in one of his books, entitled, “**Nearness Is Likeness.**” The more we are like God, the nearer we are to God.

God graciously draws near to us when we deal with the sin in our lives that keeps Him at a distance.

He will not share us with anyone else; **He must have complete control.** The double-minded Christian can never be close to God.

Again, Abraham and Lot come to mind. Abraham “drew near” and talked to God about Sodom (Gen. 18:23ff), while Lot moved into Sodom and lost the blessing of God.

Humble yourselves before God (vv. 9–10).

It is possible to submit outwardly and yet not be humbled inwardly. God hates the sin of pride (Prov. 6:16–17), and He will chasten the proud believer until he is humbled. We have a tendency to treat sin too lightly, even to laugh about it (“let your laughter be turned into mourning”). But sin is serious, and one mark of true humility is facing the seriousness of sin and dealing with our disobedience. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17). Sometimes we hear a believer pray, **“O Lord, humble me!”** That is a dangerous thing to pray.

Far better that we humble ourselves before God, confess our sins, weep over them, and turn from them. **“To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word”** (Isa. 66:2). **“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”** (Ps. 34:18).

If we obey these three instructions, then God will draw near, cleanse us, and forgive us; and the wars will cease!

We will not be at war with God, so we will not be at war with ourselves. This means we will not be at war with others.

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever” (Isa. 32:17).

Put the government of your life on His shoulders, and let Him become the Prince of Peace in your life (Isa. 9:6).