

James 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

Analysis

Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? James appeals to Scripture: the Spirit He made to dwell in us yearns jealously (phthonon epipothei, φθόνον ἐπιποθεῖ) for our undivided devotion. God's holy jealousy demands exclusive love, echoing the prophets.

Reformed theology affirms that the indwelling Spirit will not tolerate divided hearts; His jealousy exposes compromise and calls us back to covenant fidelity.

Historical Context

Diaspora believers tempted by pagan alliances needed the reminder of God's jealous love. James likely summarizes multiple texts (e.g., Exodus 34:14) to reinforce that the Spirit within us longs for undivided allegiance.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Where do you sense the Spirit yearning for deeper devotion from you?

2. What competing loves must you renounce to honor God's jealousy?
3. How can community help you maintain undivided loyalty to Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἢ	δοκεῖτε	ὅτι	κενῶς	ἢ	γραφὴ	λέγει	Πρὸς
G2228	Do ye think	that	in vain	G3588	the scripture	saith	to
	G1380	G3754	G2761		G1124	G3004	G4314
φθόνον	έπιποθεῖ	τὸ	πνεῦμα	ὅ	κατώκησεν	ἐν	ἡμῖν
envy	lusteth	G3588	The spirit	that	dwelleth	in	us
G5355	G1971		G4151	G3739	G2730	G1722	G2254

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 6:16 (Parallel theme): And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

1 Corinthians 6:19 (Spirit): What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Numbers 11:29 (Spirit): And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

Titus 3:3 (Parallel theme): For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Psalms 37:1 (Parallel theme): Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

Genesis 8:21 (Parallel theme): And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

