

14. The present tense of *zēlóō* is customary which indicates a mental attitude of an ongoing status of envy.

15. So far, our expanded translation reads this way:

James 4:2a You keep on habitually lusting, but you continuously do not have; so you habitually commit homicide. You are in an ongoing state of envy ...

16. The verse continues with the negative conjunction *οὐ (ou)*: “but,” followed by the customary present active indicative of the verb, *δύναμαι (dúnamai)*: “to be able.” However, with the negative conjunction, the action is canceled and he is said to be “unable” to do something.

17. What he is unable to do is indicated by the aorist active infinitive of *ἐπιτυγχάνω (epitunchánō)*: “to acquire.” The phrase is thus translated, “... but consistently unable to acquire.” This man is jealous of the assets of others’ but, regardless of his efforts, consistently cannot acquire them.

James 4:2 You keep on habitually lusting, but you continuously do not have that for which you lust; so you habitually commit homicide. You are in an ongoing state of envy but consistently unable to acquire; ... (EXT)

18. Because these reversionists are in reversionism they “fight and quarrel.”

Principles:

1. It is typical for believers in reversionism to be in a constant pursuit of inconsequential things which leads to a habitual satisfaction of lust patterns.
2. A believer’s spiritual life is darkened when under the dictatorship of the sin nature.
3. There are about ten of these agents provocateurs that are deployed to propagandize the soul’s volition to allow the sin nature’s cosmic behavior patterns to take command.
4. The successful result is the activation of the volition to engage in sinful behaviors through thought, speech, or physical applications.
5. In our context are a number of applications mentioned by James. He mentions the failure to satisfy one’s lust patterns which can result in murder; he has envy for someone’s assets, but cannot obtain them, and he can go physical with fisticuffs and verbal with quarrels.
6. Regardless of the situation that occurs, reversionism continues to be driven by lust patterns.

7. Regardless of what the pursued objective happens to be, the successful acquisition does not result in the happiness expected.
8. The reversionist can never acquire the happiness he pursues until he allows the inculcation and facilitation of the Word of God to move him out of the darkness into the light.
9. So, the assumed problem-solving devices are to quarrel and fight. The word quarrel is the present middle indicative of μάχομαι (*máchomai*), which refers to a verbal dispute between two people whereas the present middle indicative of πολεμέω (*poleméō*) means “to fight,” but the verb is plural so the word, “Donnybrook,” is the better definition.
10. Therefore, *poleméō*, indicates a brawl involving numerous people engaged in fisticuffs. Here is the background of the word donnybrook which is the namesake of the brawls common in the village of Donnybrook, Northern Ireland:

Donnybrook. A true donnybrook consists of a knock-down-drag-out brawl with anywhere from a handful to a mob of participants. It takes its name from the town of Donnybrook, a suburb southeast of Dublin. There, from medieval times up to the middle of the nineteenth century, were held annual fairs which for riotous debauchery rivaled the Saturnalian revels of Caesar’s time. They always wound up in fisticuffs and worse—much worse.

Over the centuries the Irish have displayed a notable disinclination to avoid a good fight. Indeed, their hankering for a brawl is as legendary as their ability at handling their traditional weapon, the shillelagh. So it’s hardly to be wondered at that the annual spectacle of thousands of Irishmen flailing lightheartedly about with splendid disregard for the Marquis of Queensberry rules should have made the name *donnybrook* synonymous with riotous brawling.⁹

11. *Poleméō*’s definitions include, “make war, to be warred upon, to be hostile; disputes of Christians among themselves; hostile attitude.”¹⁰

⁹ William Morris and Mary Morris, *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), s.v. “donnybrook.”

¹⁰ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., (2000), s.v. “*poleméō*.”



12. Next is the sentence, “You do not have because you do not ask.” This statement is designed to challenge these reversionists to stop their attitudes and behaviors that are common to believers who function in the cosmic systems.
13. It does not refer to the present mind–set of those in the context, but to the resource they are unable to access and use. These peoples’ problem-solving devices are typical of those enrolled in the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics.
14. This academy’s curriculum has educated them how to acquiesce to the lust patterns of their sin natures. It is all self-centered which puts them into competition with others leading to the question:

James 4:1 What is the source of hostility and what is the source of fisticuffs and donnybrooks among you? Is not the source your insatiable desire for sensual pleasures that wage war in the compartments of your souls?” (EXT)

15. James describes the end result of this process in:

James 4:2a, b (a) You keep on habitually lusting, but you continuously do not have that for which you lust; so you habitually commit homicide. (b) You are in an ongoing state of envy but consistently unable to acquire; so they quarrel and engage in donnybrooks. (EXT)

16. Here is the list of sins that were cited so far in the first two verses: hostility, fisticuffs, donnybrooks, sensual pleasures, waging wars, lusts, homicides, and envy followed by more quarreling and fistfights.
17. Then, following the quarreling and fist-fighting, is this closing sentence, which seems out of context: “You do not have because you do not ask.”
18. This seems to be an appeal for this crowd to stop the mayhem and have a prayer meeting. Yet that is not quite it.
19. What James does in this final sentence is to berate believers in the Diaspora and those who meet locally at his church in Jerusalem with these two charges:

James 4:2c You do not have [the negative conjunction οὐκ (*ouk*) + customary present middle indicative of δύναμαι (*dúnamai*)] because you do not ask [negative conjunction μὴ (*mé*) + the present middle infinitive of αἰτέω (*aitéō*)]. (NASB)

1. James 4:1–2b introduces the chapter about those who are described as a “madding crowd” from which one may escape by withdrawing in prayer. Close, but no cigar.¹¹ Those to whom James’s opening verses refer is the madding crowd of believers who are deep into reversionism.
2. What James wants them to do is stated at the end of the verse, but in order to do so they must remove themselves “from the “madding crowd.” Here is the source of this phrase:

Far from the madding crowd. Most of us remember Thomas Hardy’s novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*. However, the phrase was not original with Hardy. He quoted it from Thomas Gray’s famous “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” in which the following lines appear:

**“Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife, /
Their sober wishes never learned to stray; /
Along the cool sequestered vale of life /
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”**

***To mad* is a verb, now almost wholly archaic, meaning “to act out madly or insanely.” A madding crowd, then, is one that is acting like a group of lunatics.¹²**

3. The madding crowd cannot acquire what they desire because they are out of fellowship. The solution is prayer, but prayer is not available to them. The prayer line to God requires the believer to confess his sins (1 John 1:9) after which he is filled by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b).
4. Having fulfilled this prerogative, former members of the madding crowd may offer their prayers to the Father. However, in the context of James 4:2–3, none are qualified to submit a prayer to the throne room of God.
5. Therefore, in this context, verse 3 has nothing to do with prayer, although this divine privilege, once functional when in fellowship, would be an option.
6. What the madding crowd wants is the ability to acquire things, but the present condition of their souls does not allow that to occur.

(End JAS4-02. See JAS4-03 for the continuation of study at p. 21.)

¹¹ “‘Close but no cigar’ originated at traveling carnivals and sideshows. When the barker spun the wheel of fortune, the winner was customarily rewarded with the gift of a cigar. When the wheel stopped just short of the player’s number the camy barker would offer as consolation: ‘Sorry. *Close—but no cigar.*’” Morris and Morris, *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, 137.

¹² *Ibid.*, s.v. “madding crowd,” 215.



7. Who does qualify to ask and then receive? The believer who has advanced to the sophisticated spiritual life; the believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit and petitions the Father for a specific blessing.
8. Believers, who are filled with the Holy Spirit and have advanced to the sophisticated spiritual life, can ask the Father for a blessing and will receive it.
9. Advanced believers know how to pray from an inventory of advanced doctrines. Their prayers are focused on things that aggrandize their advance in the Invisible War.
10. This final sentence in verse 2 begins with the phrase, “You do not have.” It begins with the negative conjunction, **οὐκ (ouk)**: “not,” followed by the present active indicative of the verb, **ἔχω (échō)**: “have” and translated, “You do not have.”
11. The final phrase reads, “...because you do not ask.” It begins with the preposition of cause: **διὰ (diá)**: “because,” followed by the plural pronoun, **σὺ (sú)**: “y’all,” and the conjunction **μή (mē)**, translated, “not.” The verse ends with the present middle infinitive of the verb, **αἰτέω (aitéō)**: “to ask.”
12. This last sentence indicates that even if these people were filled with the Holy Spirit and functioning in the sophisticated spiritual life, they would not receive blessings because they would not pray for them. Here’s the expanded translation:

James 4:2 You keep on habitually lusting, but you continuously do not have that for which you lust; so you habitually commit homicide. You are in an ongoing state of envy, but consistently are unable to acquire; so you quarrel and engage in donnybrooks. Mature believers do not have because you do not ask. (EXT)

PRINCIPLES:

1. This passage refers to believers who have been in a prolonged state of reversionism, have engaged in the numerous behaviors such as system testing, and the frustrations and problems that are common to their lifestyles.
2. In contradistinction to the teachings of Scripture, these individuals cited by James are engaged in lust, homicide, and envy from the source of negative volition.
3. All efforts to receive benefit and satisfaction from their cosmic behavior patterns are frustrated due to their soul’s divorcement from the power and grace of the Word of God.

