

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 (*mḗ*) + the present middle infinitive of αἰτέω (*aitéō*) ]. (NASB)

1. James 4:1–2*b* 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>**

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 5:18*b*).
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.)**

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<sup>11</sup> “‘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 carry barker would offer as consolation: ‘Sorry. *Close—but no cigar.*’” Morris and Morris, *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, 137.

<sup>12</sup> *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: **διό (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.

4. Even when some aspect of a desired effort should occur it does not result in the satisfaction, pleasure, or happiness that one pursued and experienced.
5. Jealousy is a mental-attitude sin that desires what another has and wishes to either acquire it for himself or deprive another of it.
6. This effort is also accomplished regarding nonmaterial objects possessed by others such as fame, authority, reputation, social standing, popularity, status, etc.
7. However, when a person functions in the stages of reversionism he can never enjoy the possessions, accolades, attributes, and prestige he imagined, never appreciate the things he coveted, nor relish the happiness he anticipated.
8. In the final analysis, after having acquired the things for which he lusted, he discovers they do not bring him the happiness he expected and therefore fulfills the proclamation of Solomon's Preacher in Ecclesiastes.
9. In that book, Solomon related some of his experiences while he was in reversionism and his failure to find the happiness he pursued. His effort to do so was motivated by his possession of many personal attributes.
10. Solomon was smart, the king of Israel, handsome, and accomplished in various areas of function. However, he ultimately came to realize that all the while he was in pursuit of happiness, he only found emptiness. He expresses this discovery in:

**Ecclesiastes 1:1** The words of the Preacher [קְהֹלֵת] (*qoheleth*): also, "Teacher" ]: The son of David, king in Jerusalem.

**v. 2** "Vanity [הֶבֶל] (*hevel*): emptiness, meaningless, futile ] of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is [הַכֹּל] (*hakkol*)<sup>1</sup> ] vanity." (NASB)

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<sup>1</sup> "Although כֹּל (*kol*, "everything, all") is often used in an absolute or comprehensive sense, it is frequently used ... for the specific, that is, its sense is limited contextually to the topic at hand. This is particularly true of הַכֹּל (*hakkol* ["all is"]) in which the article particularizes or limits the referent to the contextual or previously mentioned topic. Thus, "all" does not always mean "all" in an absolute sense or universally in comprehension. Thus, הַכֹּל [*hakkol*] refers only to what Qoheleth [Teacher] characterizes as "futile" (הֶבֶל [*hevel*): "vanity" [NASB]), in the context. Qoheleth [Teacher] does not mean that everything in an absolute, all-encompassing sense is futile ["vanity"]. For example, the sovereign work of God is not "futile"; fearing God is not "futile"; and enjoying life as a righteous person under the blessing of God is not "futile." Only those objects or issues that are contextually placed under כֹּל (*kol* ["all"]) are designated as "futile" (הֶבֶל [*hevel*]). The context of 1:3-15 suggests that 1:2 refers to the futility of secular human endeavor." (Ecclesiastes 1:1-2 in *The NET Bible* [Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2005], s.v. 4tn1184).



11. The context of James 4:1–2 is referring to the actions of believers who are in reversionism, have lived in a soul of darkness for extended periods of time, and in doing so have desperately sought happiness for all the wrong reasons.
12. The translators note from the NET Bible gives an excellent synopsis of this condition of soul. All things are not all “vanity.” But all things sought for all the wrong reasons are best described by Solomon by the phrase, “All is vanity.”
13. The Hebrew noun, **הֶבֶל** (*hevel*), is translated into English Bibles by the noun “vanity,” which is fine, but the NET Bible selects the adjective, “futile.” The two words are noted together in the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (11th ed.) as follows:

**Vain implies simple failure to achieve a desired result. Futile may connote completeness of failure or unwisdom of undertaking.**
14. The futility experienced by the believers in this verse was caused by their prolonged existence in the cosmic systems. Those who live in darkness are incapable of producing the desired effects of their souls’ imaginings.
15. The final sentence of verse 2 illustrates this. It indicates that even if these people decided to get out of the darkness through rebound, began a serious effort to rebuild their inventory of biblical ideas, and even achieve the level of the sophisticated spiritual life, they, even then, they would not receive divine blessings because they would not ask.

### PRINCIPLES:

1. Reversionists who function in the advanced stages of reversionism never acquire any divine blessings because they are never in fellowship. Yet the desire to assuage their lust patterns is never accomplished resulting in frustration and bewilderment.
2. The lust may be for authority, but never able to acquire it and if they do, they do not know how to lead and often become tyrants.
3. The objective may be for romance, yet even if discovered it results in disaster for all involved.
4. These disappointments, frustrations, and failures occasionally result in the realization that nothing sought for is ever realized. This can sometimes inspire reversion recovery.
5. There is really nothing that can prevent a recovery from reversionism except the retrogression of the individual. If he continues to pursue truth, then the doctrinal advance will gradually restore order.

