3 ~ Lust destroys friendship with God.
"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss that you may spend it on your lusts. Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas 4:3-4). Note the contrast here between the lust and the good wish or desire.

Two Greek Words

James uses two Greek words which are translated “lust”...

i. heedonee, pleasure –James uses this word in the sense of taking pleasure in things that are evil (Jas 4:1,3, Strongs 2237)

ii. epithumia, desire –James uses this word in the sense of desiring things that God condemns (Jas 1:14,15; 4:2, Strongs 1939)

Fighting against lust and overcoming

Gaining mastery over lusts is one of the "various trials" that Christians encounter.

James begins his letter on a positive note: "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result" (Jas 1:2-4).

James's view that happiness can come from enduring trials, and that the experience is good for us, may not be easy to accept, but it is true. There are many kinds of trials, however one of the most common is our struggle to master our lusts.

Where the fight begins

The fight against sin does not begin with sin itself, but rather with the WISH to sin, that is to say with LUST. (We have already seen this in James 1:14-15). If you can gain mastery over your lusts, then you shall have victory over sin.

How God helps us

One of the ways God helps us to fight lust and temptations, is by giving us "the wisdom from above". James encourages us to pray for this wisdom (Jas 1:5-8), and later describes this wisdom as "first pure" (Jas 3:13-18).

"The wisdom from above is first pure" because it starts working where our problem with sin begins -- with our impure lust. Our lust is a wisdom which is "earthly, unspiritual, demonic" and therefore it is false wisdom. It gives birth to sin and begets all kinds of impure fruit. So God's wisdom first teaches us to desire what is good and pure, and to take pleasure in the resultant "fruit of righteousness".

Helping each other to overcome lust

Next we see that God has also provided us with help from other people… James encourages us to help each other fight and overcome lust...

(A) By turning one another away from the error of our ways. "My brethren, if one of you strays from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his ways, saves his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins" (Jas 5:19-20).

(B) By praying for one another. What James says in point (A) above, comes straight after his telling us about "the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man" (Jas 5:14-18). He encourages those who are "sick" to seek restoration by asking for prayer.

I think that James here has in mind spiritual sickness, where "lust has conceived" and, likely as not, has given birth to sin. James assures us that "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he had committed sins, they will be forgiven him" (Jas 5:15).

Because of this promise, James urges us: "Therefore confess your faults to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed" (Jas 5:16).