

HOW TO DEAL WITH PERSONAL CONFLICT, PART 5

James 4:1-10

¹What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? ⁶But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." ⁷Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Step ①: Identify the true source of conflict (vv. 1-3): UNFULFILLED SINFUL DESIRES

The true source of quarrels and conflict in our lives...

- is not the issue we are arguing about
- is not the other person we are arguing with
- is our own unfulfilled sinful desires

verse 2	<i>You lust</i>	We desire something
	↓	↓
	<i>and do not have</i>	Someone gets in the way
	↓	↓
	<i>So you commit murder</i>	We get angry
	↓	↓
	<i>So you fight and quarrel</i>	We fight and quarrel

Step ②: Identify the real sin behind conflict (vv. 4-5): SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

Conflict → living to satisfy our sinful desires → friendship with the world → spiritual adultery
(the true source) (the real sin)
(loving something > God)

Step ③: Apply the right solution to conflict (v. 6-10): GRACE

v. 6a - *But He gives a greater grace*

But is in contrast to our sin

He is God who is jealous, but gracious

gives is now and continually

greater than our sin

grace is God's positive disposition toward us even though we've earned exactly the opposite

- _____ grace
 - for murder in the heart toward others
 - for spiritual adultery against God
- _____ grace
 - to empower us to live in obedience and whole-hearted allegiance to God

Q: Knowing that we cannot earn God's grace, how do we receive or access His grace?

A: Although grace can never be earned, God has set a condition that must be met before He gives grace: _____

Proverbs 3:34

v. 6b - *Therefore it says,* "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

↓
Scripture

Negatively: GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD

- *proud* (hyperēphanos) = "to show oneself above others"
 - To regard yourself as the standard of excellence and to look down on everyone else
- Pride's beginning
 - In the heart of Lucifer ("star of the morning", "shining one", "cherub who covers")
 - Ezekiel 28:17 - *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.*
 - Isaiah 14:12-13 - *But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*
 - The very first human sin (Genesis 3:6)
- Now pride comes naturally to us
 - Romans 1:29-30 - ²⁹*being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant* (hyperēphanos)
 - 2 Timothy 3:2 - *...in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant* (hyperēphanos)
- Jonathan Edwards - *"Pride is the worst viper in the heart; it is the first sin that ever entered the universe, and it lies lowest of all in the foundation of the whole building of sin, and is the most secret, deceitful and unsearchable in its ways of working of any lust whatsoever; it is ready to mix with everything; and nothing is so hateful to God, and contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, or of so dangerous consequence; and there is no one sin that does so much let the Devil into the hearts of the saints, and expose them to his delusions."*
- C.J. Mahaney - *"The sad fact is that none of us are immune to the logic-defying, blinding effects of pride. Though it shows up in different forms and to differing degrees, it infects us all. The real issue here is not if pride exists in your heart; it's where pride exists and how pride is being expressed in your life. Scripture shows us that pride is strongly and dangerously rooted in all of our lives, far more than most of us care to admit or even think about."*

How can pride manifest itself in our life?

- We can be proud of our _____ and our _____
 - Daniel 4:30 - *The king reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty?"*
- We can be proud of our _____ and our _____
 - Matthew 23:6-7 - *They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.*
- We can take pride in our spiritual _____
 - Matthew 23:5 - *But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments.*
- We can take pride in our spiritual _____, responsibilities, and privileges.
 - Romans 12:3 - *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*
- We can be proud of _____
 - 1 Corinthians 8:1 - *Knowledge makes arrogant*
- We can be proud of our _____ (those things that go beyond Scripture)
 - 1 Corinthians 4:6 - *Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.*

How can pride manifest itself toward God?

- We deny God's _____
 - Psalms 10:4 - *The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."*
- We _____ the Word of God
 - Nehemiah 9 - ¹⁶*But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments. ²⁹[You] admonished them in order to turn them back to Your law. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Your commandments but sinned against Your ordinances...And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not listen.*
- We refuse to give God _____ and _____ for what He does
 - 2 Chronicles 32:25 - *But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud.*
- We can display an _____, self-_____ spirit
 - Hosea 13:5 - *I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of drought. As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud. Therefore, they forgot Me!*

What is God's perspective of pride?

- Proverbs 16:5 - *Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, He will not be unpunished.*
- James 4:6b - *God is opposed to the proud*
 - *opposed* = “to station” or “arrange against”
 - God continually takes up arms against, or does battle with, the proud person
- Psalm 18:27 - *You save an afflicted people, but haughty eyes you abase.*
- Psalm 138:6 - *Though the Lord is exalted, yet he regards the lowly; but the haughty He knows from afar.*
- Daniel 4:37 - *I praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven...for He is able to humble those who walk in pride.*
- 2 Chronicles 26 - ¹*And all the people of Judah took Uzzaiah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah. ²He built Eloah, and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers. ³Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. ⁴He did right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁵He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him...¹⁶But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the Lord, valiant men. They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the Lord God. But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the altar of incense. Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD.*
- Job 40 - ¹*Then the LORD said to Job, ²“Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.”... ⁶Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm and said, ⁷“Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. ⁸Will you really annul my judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified? ⁹Or do you have an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His? ¹⁰Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, and clothe yourself with honor and majesty. ¹¹Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on everyone who is proud, and make him low. ¹²Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him.”*

Main point of v. 6:

The "proud" are not only those who see themselves above others, or who live with an independent spirit, but the "proud" are those who are engaged in quarrels and conflicts.

Remember, quarrels and conflicts come from living to fulfill our sinful desires and find satisfaction apart from God. In the midst of conflict, if we refuse to humble ourselves, acknowledge our sin, and repent (vv. 7-10), we are not going to receive _____.

If we stubbornly remain in a quarrel or conflict, holding out to get what we want, refusing to repent, we are proving ourselves to be _____, and God will put Himself in active opposition to us.

How does God oppose the proud?

- Daniel 4:37 - *He is able to humble those who walk in pride.*
- God has just the right weapons (or instruments) for everyone who is proud.
 - _____
 - 1 Peter 5:6 - *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God...*
 - _____
 - Galatians 6:3,7-8a - *³For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself...⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption...*
 - _____
 - Romans 2:4-5a - *⁴Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart...*
 - _____
 - Philippians 2:8 - *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
- If we continue in quarrels and conflicts without humble repentance, God will humble us through these various means with the goal of reminding us of our great need for Him.
 - “Be _____ or be _____”
- When we live in pride, then we shut off God's grace: *God is opposed to the proud.*
- The proud cannot receive God's grace because they feel no need, so God attempts to remind the proud through His various weapons and instruments.

Positively: BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

- To the humble, God befriends and consistently treats with favor and goodness
- We cannot earn God's grace by our humility (we will always deserve His wrath whether we humble ourselves before Him or not), but God has sovereignly determined to give grace only to those who humble themselves before Him.
- Douglas Moo - *“God's gift of sustaining grace is enjoyed only by those willing to admit their need and accept His gift.”*
- Psalm 34:18 - *The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*
- Isaiah 57:15 - *For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*
- Isaiah 66:2 - *But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.*
- Matthew 5:3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit*
- Luke 5:30 - *The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?” And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”*
 - Martin Luther - *“It is God's nature to make something out of nothing. That is why He cannot make anything out of him who is not yet ‘nothing.’”*
 - It's only when we come to recognize ourselves as nothing that God is ready to intervene.

Summary:

James wants us to know that pride not only puts us on a collision course with others, but it also puts us on a collision course with God (*God is opposed to the proud*). So in vv. 7-10, he will show us how to humble ourselves before God so that we can receive His grace (*but He gives grace to the humble*).