

HOW TO DEAL WITH PERSONAL CONFLICT, PART 1

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 _____ of conflict (vv. 1-3)

Godless Wisdom	Godly Wisdom
3:14-16 - <i>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.</i>	3:17-18 - <i>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.</i>
The chief characteristics/motives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• bitter jealousy• selfish ambition	The chief characteristic/motive: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• first pure,<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy
The results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• disorder• every evil thing	The results: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• peace• righteousness
Conclusion: Where there is no peace, there is unrighteousness.	Conclusion: Where there is righteousness, there will be peace.

If godless wisdom exists in a person life, there will be conflict in three areas.

- Conflict with _____ (v. 1a)
- Conflict within _____ (v. 1b)
- Conflict with _____ (v. 4)

4:1b *What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?*

GREEK: From where wars and from where battles?

- *What is the source* (pothen = “from where?”)
- *quarrels* (polemos) *and conflicts* (machē)
 - Can refer to:
 - (1) literal wars and battles
 - (2) quarrels and conflicts between individuals
 - *quarrels* = “armed conflict” (Revelation 2:16; 12:7; 13:4; 17:14; 19:11)
 - *conflicts* = “battles” (Joshua 4:13) → verbal fighting (NT) or “war of _____”
- Sadly, Christians are not exempt from conflict:
 - James is writing to professed Christians
 - The Corinthian church
 - 1 Corinthians 1:11 - *I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.*
 - In 6:1-11, these quarrels had grown to lawsuits
 - Even after writing three letters to this church
 - (1) the “lost letter” (1 Cor. 5:9)
 - (2) 1 Corinthians
 - (3) the “severe” letter (2 Cor. 2:4)
 - and in the midst of writing a 4th letter (2 Corinthians),
 - and after all the time he spent in Corinth, Paul writes this in 12:20...
I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances.
 - The Philippian church
 - 4:2 - *I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.*
 - Robert Johnstone - *“Men and women, who on the Sabbath have sat side by side at the Lord's Table, and drunk of the common cup of love, will scowl at, and argue with, and thwart each other all the week. And the feeling is not infrequently such as to remind one of the host of Midian, when every man's sword was turned against his fellow.”*
 - Baruch Spinoza - *“I have often wondered, that persons who make a boast to professing the Christian religion, namely love, joy, peace, temperance, and charity to all men, should quarrel with such rancorous animosity, and display daily towards one another such bitter hatred, that this, rather than the virtues they claim, is the readiest criterion of their faith.”*

As a Christian, are you peaceable, gentle and reasonable (3:17), or are you a person who quarrels and argues constantly?

Q: Why does James ask where quarrels and conflicts come from?

A: He's implying that we tend to look at the _____ (the external), not the source. Instead, we must ask ourselves, "What is it in my sinful heart that is causing me to be in conflict with that person?"

It doesn't matter:

- who the other person is
- whether the other person is a Christian or not
- whether the other person is doing what he ought to do or not doing what he ought to do
- what the _____ is

What James wants us to see is that if you are engaged in a quarrel or conflict, the source of the problem is _____.

4:1 - *What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?*

Answer: The source of the quarrels and conflicts among you is your _____

- *pleasures* [hēdonē (Greek) = _____ (English)]
 - Original meaning: the desire to experience the sense of taste
 - Biblical meaning: the desire to experience all the senses

The worldly philosophy that the highest goal of man is to experience pleasure

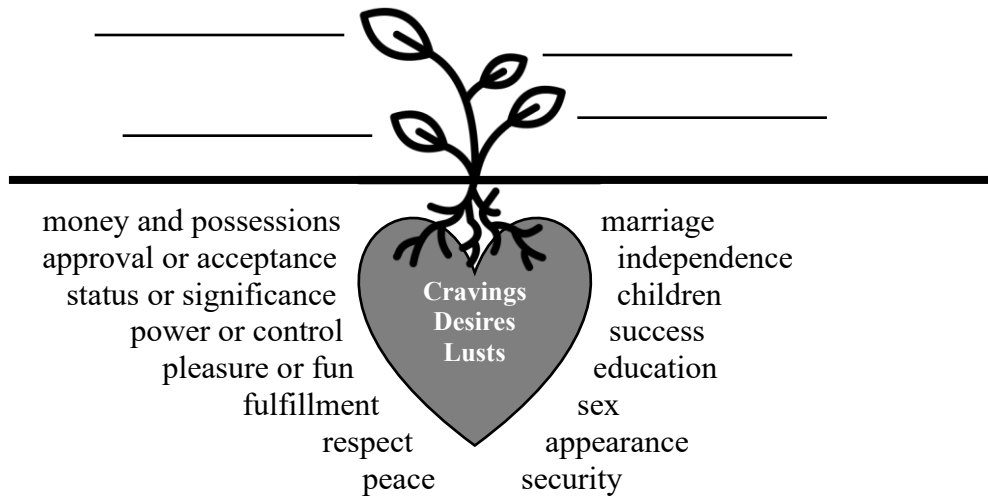
- Luke 8:14 - *The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures (hēdonē) of this life (bios).*
- Titus 3:3 - *For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures (hēdonē).*
- 2 Peter 2:13 - *They count it a pleasure (hēdonē) to revel in the daytime.*
- James 4:3 - *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures (hēdonē).*

4:1b - *Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?*

4:2a - *You lust*

↓	↓	↓
_____	_____	_____
(part of speech)	(part of speech)	_____
	strateuō	melos = human bodies
	present tense	--physical bodies
	"constantly waging war"	--mind, will, emotions

- 1 Peter 2:11 - *Beloved, I urge you...to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.*
- James 1:13-14 - ¹³*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.*



Q: How do cravings produce quarrels and conflicts?

A:

- Edmund Hiebert - *“These cravings, in demanding gratification, actively enter into conflict with fellow believers who thwart the fulfillment of those desires. Those outer desires reveal inner tension.”*
- John Blanchard - *“The simple truth is that a man can only satisfy all of his own self-centered desires by conflicting with the desires of other people.”*

Q: How do we stop quarrels and conflicts?

A: Identify the true source

- The true source of the problem is not the _____ you are arguing about.
- The true source of the problem is not the other _____ you are arguing with.
- The true source of the problem is _____ (our _____)

Homework:

Every time you find yourself in a quarrel/conflict this week, stop and ask yourself this question:
What self-centered craving am I trying to _____ by engaging in this argument?

If we are engaged in a quarrel or a conflict, then _____ are the issue.

Q: Why is it important that we deal with conflict?

A: Because of who we _____, because of what it _____ to those around us, and because it demeans and destroys the beauty and character of _____ and His _____.

- Ephesians 4:1-6 - *¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

(One) Solution:

Galatians 5:16 - *Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*