

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN FAMILY

PRESENTED BY JOHN AVERY

James 4:1-10

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

James 4

Why are there conflicts? Because of YOU! Each person must be aware of this truth. No one is off the hook.

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

• The Location of the source of our conflicts that lead to Fights and Quarrels.

- a. OUR DESIRES James 4:1.
 - i. God's design for our desires
 1. 2 Cor 5:9 and 1 Cor 10:31
 2. (I'm not making a political statement when I say, nothing should Trump our desire to please/glorify God.
 3. We need God's direction and instruction on what we should want and how we go about going about getting what we want.
 - b. Our desires: (desire for pleasure, what we want) James 4:1

We do what we do because we want what we want.

 - i. What desires is James talking about? Good desires gone bad are tricky
 1. An inordinate amount of affection put on desire is where things go wrong.
 2. I want something to the point that I'm wanting it more than I'm wanting to glorify God.
 3. I am prideful because I have set myself against God's desires for me and mine are more important than what He tells me. PRIDE
 4. Our inner tendencies are to blame shift, hide our sin, or cover it up. PRIDE

James 4:2 You 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.

- **The Longings that lead to selfishness**

- a. You lust (want something too much) and do not have; so you commit murder
 - i. We are willing to sin to GET what we DESIRE/WANT.
- b. You are Envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel
 - i. We are willing to sin if we DON'T GET what we DESIRE/WANT.

This is a relational passage. The relationships in view are with one another in verse 1 and with the Lord verses 5, 6-8. This is a gospel focused passage because of the grace that God wants to give His children as they humble, draw near to Him, resist the devil, and repent and turn to the Lord in humble dependence.

Selfishness and pride lead to conflicts. Humility leads to fellowship with each other and the Lord Jesus.

First recognize your own desires. As a parent or spouse realize your own contribution to conflict in your home. G.K. Chesterton answered a question in his newspaper: "what's the problem with the world?" He submitted a two-word response: "I am."

Matthew 7:3-5. See my sin first, see it as worse, and see the need to work on it the most. That's humility and integrity! What is the biggest problem in my family? "I am."

- **The Love of Christ that leads to fellowship and change: James 4:6-10 is the power of the gospel of grace lived out.**

- a. God gives grace to humble: His enabling strength from the Holy Spirit
- b. Submit to God (do things His way) resist the devil (reject his lies on how to handle conflict)
- c. Draw near to God and confess your sin. Don't blame, hide, or try to cover.
- d. Keep short accounts with the Lord and each other.
- e. What oil is to an engine forgiveness and grace are to relationships!

- **Helping Kids Handle Conflict from the Heart**

Family conflicts are not just about toys, turns, or words—they start in the heart. James 4 helps us teach kids to see the "war inside" and turn to God, not just "act nice."

"Don't they come from the desires at war within you?" (James 4:1)

1. Name the “War Inside”

Key Verse: James 4:1

- Go beyond: “Stop hitting!”
- Ask: “What were you wanting right then?” “Were you wanting to love your brother/sister, or get your own way?”
- Simple phrase: “There’s a war in your heart: ‘I want to be kind and please the Lord vs. ‘I want my way.’ Which did you choose?”
- Goal: Kids connect fights to their own desires, not just blame (“They started it”).

2. “I Want” vs. “I Love”

Key Verse: James 4:2

- Teach two choices: “I want what I want.” OR “I want to love God and others.”
- In conflict: “Right now, are you choosing ‘I want’ or ‘I love’?”
- After: “If you chose ‘I love,’ what could you have done instead?”

3. Ask God Instead of Grabbing

Key Verse: James 4:2

- Teach: “When you really want something, first talk to God, not just grab.
- In the moment: “Before you grab, you can pray: ‘God, help me be patient/kind/share.’”
- After a fight, pray together: “God, we both wanted the same thing. Help us want what You want.” Connect them to the Lord who can help and will help them.
- Ask them: Are you willing to sin to get what you want? OR are you willing to sin if you don’t get what I want?
- **Reframe the conflict in your mind and theirs that it is a gospel opportunity. Draw near to God!**

4. Check Motives

Key Verse: James 4:3

- Gently ask: “Why do you want that?” “Is this just to make you happy, or could it help you love God and others too?”
- Explain: “Wanting fun isn’t wrong, but if you want it so much that you hurt others, that’s a wrong motive.”

5. Teach Humility (“I Was Wrong”)

Key Verses: James 4:6,10 God can give you His strength to love others, to love and honor Him.

- Normalize: “In our family, we say, ‘I was wrong,’ because God loves humble hearts.”
- After a fight: “What did you do wrong in this argument?” (Focus on their part.)
- Simple confession pattern:
 1. “I was wrong when I.”
 2. “I’m sorry I.”
 3. “Will you forgive me?”

6. Resist the Devil's Lies

Key Verse: James 4:7

- Explain: "The devil lies, 'You must win,' 'You deserve more,' 'Hit back.' We can say 'No!' to those lies."
- Ask: "What lie were you believing just now?"
- Practice: "No, that's not true. I will trust God and choose to love instead." Put off and put on: replace lies with God's truth. Colossians 3

7. Draw Near to God After Conflict

Key Verse: James 4:8

- Don't just move on—turn to God: "We hurt each other and disobeyed God. Let's come close to Him." His grace lets us draw near to the Lord. You are accepted by Him. OR share the gospel. Jesus came to save and forgive you so you can know Him.
- Simple prayer: "God, we sinned and were selfish. Thank You that Jesus forgives us. Help us love better next time."
- Conflict is an opportunity to talk to them about Jesus, His forgiveness, and their opportunity to trust and talk with Christ.

8. Model It as a Parent

- James 4 is for us too. Kids learn most from what they see.
- When you sin against them: "I was letting my 'I want' win instead of loving you. I'm asking God to forgive me. Will you forgive me too?" Don't sweep it under the rug. Don't let it accumulate. Deal with it.

• A Simple Conflict Routine (James 4 in Action)

◦ When Conflict Happens:

1. Pause and calm everyone.
2. Ask: "What were you wanting?"
3. Name the war: "'I want' is fighting 'I love.'" Greatest motive is to please and honor God
4. Check motives: "Were you thinking of God and others, or just yourself?"
5. Lead to humility: "What did you do wrong? Say it clearly." Say it specifically.
6. Pray a short confession to God.
7. Ask each other's forgiveness.
8. Plan: "Next time, how can you choose God's way and honor Him instead?"