



WEDNESDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: The Source of Conflict

Passage: James 4:1-3

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: Conflict is something we all know too well. We see it in the world—wars, political division, arguments at work or school—but it doesn't stay "out there." It comes into our homes, our marriages, our families, and even our churches. The real issue isn't Washington, D.C.; it's the human heart. James tells us that conflict begins with our desires. We want what we want, and when someone blocks our way, sparks fly. It may not result in violence, but it produces bitterness, broken relationships, and wounded churches. Even more serious, James says these selfish desires harm our prayer life. They poison both our relationships with others and our fellowship with God. So James cuts straight to the heart of the matter. Before peace can flow outward, our desires must be surrendered to the Lord. Only then can the conflict within us—and around us—begin to quiet.

I. The Source of Conflict (Verse 1)

The root of conflict isn't the other person—it's the war inside our own hearts.

Our desires clash, and when we can't have what we want, we lash out.

Conflict is ultimately a spiritual problem—a heart full of selfish desires.

Our selfishness doesn't just damage relationships with people; it even affects our relationship with God.

II. The Frustration of Selfish Desires (Verse 2)



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Conflict comes because we demand from others what only God can give.

Selfish desires never satisfy—no matter how much we get, we remain empty.

Our souls were not made to be filled by control, comfort, or compliance, but by Christ.

When we don't bring our needs to God, we try to squeeze them out of people—and it never works.

The answer isn't controlling others; it's surrendering to Christ.

III. The Corruption of Prayer (Verse 3)

Sometimes our prayers are not denied—they are exposed as selfish.

We don't want God's will; we want God to fund our will.

When we pray for our pleasure, we 'ask amiss,' and God will not underwrite our selfishness.

"...If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." (1 John 5:14)

Unanswered prayer often traces back to one source—selfish desires.

Conclusion: Our text tonight is a mirror that forces us to face the truth: conflict doesn't start "out there"—it starts in our own hearts. Our restless desires leave us frustrated, and even our prayers become twisted when we seek only our own pleasure. But here's the hope: God gives more grace. The answer to conflict isn't better techniques or stronger willpower—it's surrender. When we yield our desires to God, His grace can bring peace where our selfishness brought turmoil. So where are you facing conflict—in your home, your relationships, or even the church? James invites us to trace it back to the heart, bring it before God, and lay it at His feet. If we humble ourselves and confess our selfishness, the war inside us quiets, our relationships heal, and our prayers are heard. God's grace is greater than our conflict.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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