

Walking the Path of Reconciliation

James 4:1-12

Introduction:

- A. Welcome Scripture Reader
- B. James prayer and practice challenge Week 8.
- C. James opens chapter 4 with a loaded question:

I The Assumptions – 4:1a “*What causes quarrels and fights among you?*”

- A. Quarrels and fights will happen.
- B. Our first response is not generally our best response.

II The Biblical Response: Address The Problem Not The Symptoms

- A. Look In At Your Desires - 4:1b-2 *Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.*

- 1. We may say “I’ve never killed. I’ve never coveted.”
- 2. Those thoughts may have never been acted upon, but if we fail to recognize them and put them under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. Look in at your desires.

- B. Look In And Check Your Motives 4:3 - *You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

- 1. Desires fuel the motive. Motive determines the ask.
- 2. When we do not receive what we think we want from God, we blame God for whatever we don’t get.

- C. The Biblical response when there is quarrel or a fight with others or God, is to look in. Check yourself first.

III The Biblical Solution 4:4-10

- A. Recognize the duplicity in your life - 4:4 - *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

- 1. What it boils down to is flesh versus Spirit and which one we will yield to.

2. James has already addressed our tendency toward duplicity several times.
 - a. Doubled mindedness from - James 1
 - b. Disconnection between our faith and deeds – James 2
 - c. Inconsistent speech – James 3
3. A couple of question to ask yourself:
 - a. What fruit is being produced from the stance that I have taken?
 - b. Do my actions and interaction reflect the Holy Spirit or my flesh?
4. Follow the fruit back to its source.
5. This takes honest evaluation

B. **Repent – 4:5-6** - *Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."*

1. Turn toward the Holy Spirit and God image inside of us that is drawing us toward God and not away from him.
2. This is takes humility but it's where we find grace. Grace that heals.

C. **Submit to God – 4:7-10**

- Submission is one of the many paradoxes in the Bible.
 - Submission is the first move toward being lifted up.
 - When I bend a knee to God, it sets me on a different path.
1. **Submit yourselves, then, to God 4:7a** - First it puts God back in the place where he is supposed to be and take me out of the place I have clawed my way to.
 2. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you 4:7b** - Second, in submission to God I can resist the devil and he flees because I am under his protection and control.
 3. **Come near to God and he will come near to you. 4:8 a** Third, restores fellowship with God setting the path to be restored with his people. You can't be right with Go and wrong with his people. –
 4. **Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. - 4:8b-9**

- a. It allows me to see clearly.
 - b. I can mourn and grieve my sin.
 - c. My defenses are down and my vulnerabilities are up, which means I am learning, relearning to trust the Lord's care.
5. *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. - 4:10* - I experience restoration and healing.

IV Look Out To Others 4:11-12 *Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*

- A. The only time, the text ever mentions looking at others is right here at the end.
- B. Refuse to talk bad about others.
- C. Let God be the judge.
- D. Stay humble. Be merciful.

Conclusion:

- A. Started with a loaded question; “what causes fights and quarrels among you?”
- B. I will end with a loaded question. “Who came to mind when we read that verse?”
- C. Reconciliation starts by looking in at myself, not the person I’m in conflict with.
 - 1. Jesus said in Matthew 5:23-24 - *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.*
 - 2. The gift to God, was the reconciliation.
 - 3. It can be a tough journey but a necessary one.
- D. Offer invite...