

Conflict & the wayward believer: What to do?

James 4:1-10

3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Chap. 4

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Where do fights and conflicts come from?

- Our battling desires within us (vs. 1)
- Not getting what we want (when we want it) (vs. 2)
- Coveting what someone else has – a lack of contentment (vs. 2)
- We try to get what we think we need on our own without asking God (vs 2)
- Or we ask God with the wrong motives to not relying on God and his sovereign will to provide what we truly need (vs. 3)

James 3:17-18 Characteristics of a Heavenly Wise Christian	James 4:1-5 Characteristics of a Christian who is world-loving friend
Pure	Internal conflicted over competing desires
Peace-loving	Kill others (at least in thought)
Considerate	Covet what others have
Submissive	Quarrelers and fighters
Full of mercy and good fruit	Full of focus on one's temporal pleasures
Impartial	Partial to self-interest, not in tune with God
Sincere	Ask with the wrong motives

- 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. ⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?

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- ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

What is humility?

“True humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less” – C.S. Lewis

“Humility is having a proper perspective of God compared to us. It is not thinking too highly of ourselves or too lowly of ourselves, but seeing ourselves as we really are in relation to God.” The Blazing Center

Humility involves coming back to and embracing the full truth that we are not God, that He made us and knows us far, far better than we know ourselves. And because he is trustable and loves us so deeply, we submit to His will.

What does humility look like and do?

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Small group discussion questions

- How do you see the causes of conflict that James refers to in vs. 1-5 related to the conflicts in your relationships?
- When have you sensed God giving you “more grace”?
- What makes it easy for you to humbly repent and submit to God (again)? What can be difficult about this for you?
- What part of this passage in James most resonates with you?