

Fleshed Out: A Journey Through the New Testament Letter of James

“Choosing God Over the World”

Discuss

Today, in our culture, relational breakdowns have become the norm. It's almost as though we feel like we have the right to dehumanize people when we disagree. Once we dehumanize a person, we seem to think we're free to talk about them in any way we see fit.

James tells us that before things get to this point, we need to first examine ourselves. Can we get to the point where we realize that the reason we are hostile to other people is because we are at war with ourselves? And that those people who we are hostile towards are the same people that God has called us to love and sacrifice for?

“What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them.”
[\(James 4:1-2a, NLT\)](#)

- How do you interact with those you disagree with? Is there a line between people we should love unconditionally and those who are unsafe, that we should protect ourselves from? Where is that line for you?
- Do you have a plan for when you feel anger rise up within you? Do you paint yourself as a “victim”? Do you habitually take responsibility for the desires at war within you? Do you lash out at people? Do you typically react in a way that honors God?
- Some arguments are worth having and some are not. James tells us that we typically fight because of our selfishness. Can you think of some reasons when arguments are beneficial?

James reminds us not to become envious of others because we can simply request what we want from God. But he warns us that we may not receive it when our reason for the request does not align with God being the leader of our lives. Meaning that we are making a request that is selfish; a request that will take our dependence off of God. God wants to give us what we want as long as our motives are pure.

“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. 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. 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:

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*“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”*
[\(James 4:2b-6, NIV\)](#)

- Has there been a time where you went to God with your request and received what you asked for? What was it?
- Is there anything that you could ask God for that is not selfish in any way?
- Do you think it is harmful to see God as someone who just gives you your worldly desires? Could someone become disillusioned with God if this is the only type they ever make?

James has told us that God does not desire us to be “lukewarm” followers of Jesus. He wants us to be totally committed. He wants us to go to God in confidence because we are in a committed relationship with Him. The solution to relational breakdown, to us being at war with ourselves, and trying to live up to the world’s expectations is to totally commit ourselves to God.

“So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him make himself scarce. Say a quiet yes to God and he’ll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it’s the only way you’ll get on your feet.” [\(James 4:7-10, Msg\)](#)

- For you personally, what would a life totally committed to God look like?
- Why do you think God is so against being “lukewarm”?
- The Bible constantly warns against our private life not matching up with our public life. Are there any areas in your life where the two need to be more synchronized?

Next Steps

Spiritual growth begins with us being honest with ourselves. We need to know exactly where we are to figure out where we need to go. We all have areas of our lives in which we are “lukewarm” For you, think through what those areas are. Think about how you can move those areas Christ’ leadership. Remember that this is a process, God does not expect us to be perfect, but he does expect for us to be faithful.

August 25: [The Ground Online Book Club: “A Voice in the Wind”](#)

August 28: [Missions 2.0 Serve Day: Second Harvest Food Bank](#)

August 29: [MecKidz Baptism Orientation](#)

Daily: [Training Camp](#)

MESSAGE MEDITATIONS

MECKLENBURG COMMUNITY CHURCH’S WEEKEND MESSAGE REFLECTIONS

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Continued Reading

Read: [\(Revelation 3:15-18, Msg\)](#)

Prayer

God,

Thank you for all that you do for me. I know there are areas of my life that I am working on bringing under your leadership. I want to open the door fully for you to enter every aspect of my life. Please keep me strong through this process. I want to be a follower who is totally committed to you.

Amen.