

“Conflict: Its Cause and Cure”

James 4:1-10

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I. Introduction

- A. To dwell above with the saints in love, that will be glory; but to live below with the saints I know, brother, that’s another story
 - 1. It’s sad when you realize that James is talking not to non-Christians, but to Christians (not to the world, but to the church)
 - 2. The two questions James asked (v. 1)
 - 3. The problem is as old as Cain and Abel
 - 4. James does two things:
 - a) The cause of our conflict (vv. 1-5)
 - b) The cure for our conflict (vv. 6-10)

II. What Causes our Conflicts? (James 4:1-3)

- A. Hedonism (vv. 1-3)
 - 1. Greek “hedonism” is the philosophy that pleasure is the most important pursuit of life
 - 2. It’s the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain
 - 3. Christian Hedonism
 - 4. Knowing God does bring pleasure, but the purpose and pursuit of life is God, not pleasure
 - 5. Sadly, even Christians forget God and follow their own lusts
 - a) This results in conflicts
 - b) Does your prayer life reveal a hedonistic heart?
- B. Worldliness (vv. 4-5)
 - 1. What is an “adulteress?” (v. 4)
 - 2. What is the “friendship of the world?” (v. 4)
 - 3. You become the enemy of God (v. 4)
 - 4. God is jealous for your love and faithfulness
 - a) The spirit which He has made to dwell in us jealously desires us (v. 5)
 - b) It causes the Holy Spirit pain
 - 1) Illustration- Like a marriage
 - c) Don’t grieve the Spirit
 - 1) Illustration- Sower and the Seed (choked by weeds)
 - 2) This leads to conflict (no right with God or others)
 - a. Selflessness
 - b. Prayerlessness
 - c. Worldliness

III. What’s the Cure for Conflict? (James 4:6-10)

- A. God’s greater grace (v. 6)
 - 1. “But He giveth more grace” (v. 6)

- a) It's not a saving grace, it's living grace
 - b) It's God enabling overflowing grace
 - c) To help us live in a fallen world
2. It's hard to live for God in this sinful world, so God provides us with His help (more grace)
- a) "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace upon grace" (John 1:16)
 - b) "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20)
 - c) It's God's all-sufficient, all-sustaining grace
 - 1) For daily needs (daily grace)
 - 2) For sudden needs (sudden grace)
 - 3) For overwhelming needs (overwhelming grace)
 - d) Illustration- Paul's thorn (2 Corinthians 12)
 - e) "He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more grace when the labors increase; To added afflictions He addeth His mercy, to multiplied trials He multiplied peace. When we have exhausted our store of endurance, when our strength has failed ere the day is half done: When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father's full giving is only begun. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundary known unto men; For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth, and giveth again." – Annie Johnson Flint
3. How do I tap into the "greater grace?"
- a) It's not for the proud, it's for the humble (v. 6)
4. What steps should I take to experience God's greater grace that results in contentment? Five commands:
- a) Submit yourself to God (v. 7a)
 - 1) Get back in the rank
 - 2) Illustration- Satan- "I will" and Jesus- "thy will"
 - b) Resist the Devil (v. 7b)
 - 1) We must act (Ephesians 6)
 - a. "Belt of truth"
 - b. "Breastplate of righteousness"
 - c. "Shield of faith"
 - d. "Helmet of salvation"
 - e. "Sword of the Spirit"
 - f. "The Word of God"
 - g. "Praying always"
 - 2) The promise, "and he will flee from you" (v. 7b)
 - c) Draw near to God (v. 8)
 - 1) "It is good for me to draw near to God" (Psalm 73:28)
 - 2) The command is followed by a promise
 - a. "And He will draw nigh to you" (v. 8)
 - b. Illustration- The Prodigal Son
 - 3) How do I draw near to God?
 - a. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners" (v. 8)
 - b. "And purify your hearts, ye double minded" (v. 8)
 - c. Your attitudes
 - d) Be miserable (v. 9)

- 1) “Be afflicted” or “be miserable”
- 2) It carries the idea of being broken and feeling wretched because of your sin
- 3) The Christian life is a joyful life, but not when there is sin in our lives
- 4) It’s talking about repentance
 - a. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4)
 - b. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17)
 - c. “Mourn” and “weep”
 - d. Jesus said, “Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep” (Luke 6:25)
 - e. Sow in tears, reap in joy
- e) Humble yourselves (v. 10)
 - 1) It’s a summary verse
 - 2) It’s a universal law of God
 - a. The way down is up
 - b. The way up is down
 - 3) The gravity of God’s grace always flows to the humble
 - a. “He giveth grace to the humble” (v. 6)

IV. Conclusion

- A. Will you?
 1. Submit to God?
 2. Resist the Devil?
 3. Draw near to God?
 4. Weep and mourn?
 5. Humble yourself?
 - a) Do it now, don’t wait
- B. God will save you by His grace