

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Conflict Resolution

James 4:1-3

Recognizing the Root of Conflict

James 4:1-3 (NLT) 1 “What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you? 2 You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it....”

- James, the brother of Jesus and a leader in the early Christian church write to the Jesus Christians that were scattered across the Roman Empire
- James was aware of the challenges in the church and he sought to provide guidance and direction
- James opens chapter 4 with a question for the churches he’s writing to, “**What is causing the quarrels and fights among you?**”
- Within the church, there were hostilities, conflicts, and confrontations amongst church members
- James speaks of wars and fightings within the church
- These were not minor disagreements, but long-lasting hostilities
- There were verbal fights in the church
- These quarrel and fightings are the “symptoms” of problems within the church, but not the *cause*
- What is causing the quarrels and fighting in the church?
- James identifies the cause; “**Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you?**”
- The cause of quarreling and fighting within the church was caused by the desires (lusts) and selfish ambitions of those in the church
- Lust is the passion pleasure and self-gratification that exists in our flesh
- James says the *root cause* of our wars, battles and struggles is the lusts or evil desires *within us*
- We have a war, an internal conflict on the inside of us; one part of us is fighting for self-gratification and the other part of us is fighting to resist and walk in humility **Galatians 5:17 (KJV) 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.**
- The external manifestation is a product of *internal spiritual issues*, Jesus said **Matthew 12:34 (KJV) 34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**
- The destructive nature of worldly desires can cause us pursue selfish ambitions over seeking God’s will
- **Application:** Conflict often stems from unchecked desires and selfishness.

Seeking Fulfillment in God

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. Yet you don’t have what you want because you

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Conflict Resolution

James 4:1-3

don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

- Not only is there lust for pleasure, self-gratification; there's also distrust
- Verse 2 says, **"2 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. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it."**
- There is a desire, a passion for more
- The problem comes when we ignore, neglect, and deny God, we allow our desires to run wild
 - *Some desire and do not have – they lack initiative*
 - *Some desire so much that they will lie, cheat, steal, or kill to get it*
 - *Some desire so much, that they're willing to fight and go to war to get it*
- But no matter what the desire is, you'll never satisfied, you'll crave more and more and you'll do whatever to get it
- The tragedy of our lusts, our passions is they never live up to hype
- Our desires are never satisfied apart from God, *"you have not because you ask not"*
- There's great power in prayer, but unfortunately many believers live in *spiritual poverty* because they either *do not pray* or they *do not ask* when they pray
- When we're busy relying on "our own understanding and emotions" instead of seeking God's will through prayer, the work of God suffers
- **Application:** True fulfillment comes from seeking God's will and aligning our desires with His purposes.

Prayerful Dependence on God

3 "And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong - you want only what will give you pleasure."

- Not only is "no prayer" a problem, but so is *selfish prayer*, when we pray with wrong motives
- If we pray with selfish motives, we're seeking personal gain, and it may lead to conflicts with others
- This type of praying leads to selfish behavior and potential conflicts
- Our prayers are often not answered because we pray amiss, or we ask for the *wrong reasons* with the *wrong motives*
- What is the *right motive* for prayer?
- The right motive for prayer is to *glorify* God, not "gratify" ourselves
- If our prayer is for:
 - *Life, health and strength*, it must be so that we can glorify God with our lives
 - *Success in church or our secular work*, it must be so that we can glorify God

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Conflict Resolution

James 4:1-3

- *More financial resources or material things*, it must be so that we can glorify God with our financial resources or material things
- James is challenging believers to examine their hearts and motives, acknowledging the role of pride and selfishness in hindering their prayers
- **Application:** Effective prayer requires sincerity and alignment with God's will.

Pursuing God's Peaceful Resolution

3 "And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong - you want only what will give you pleasure."

- In the 2nd part of verse 3, James warns believers against asking God for selfish desires that serve only to gratify our own pleasures, urging believers to align their desires with God's will
- James says some people may use prayer a manipulative tool to achieve their own agenda or gain an advantage over other people
- How can believers resolve these types of conflicts?
- To resolve conflicts with brothers and sisters in Christ, as believers we can:
 - *Seek reconciliation* – Taking steps to address the conflict through open and honest conversation
 - *Be forgiving* – Choose to forgive those who have wronged you
 - *Practice humility* – Humbly acknowledge your faults and shortcomings in the conflict and prioritizing peace and unity
 - *Pray with the right motives* – Sincerely pray for reconciliation and restoration; aligning your prayer with God's will
- Your praying will be different when you're working to resolve conflict
- A believer's prayers in working through conflict resolution will be characterized by:
 - *Humility* – You take ownership of your faults and the need for God's grace in the reconciliation
 - *Sincerity* – You're praying sincerely for the well-being and reconciliation of all parties involved in the conflict; without selfish motive or manipulative agendas
 - *Faith* – Praying in faith is trusting God's wisdom and timing to bring about a resolution and restoration in the conflict
 - *Submission to God's will* – Praying and submitting to God's will aligning your desires and requests with His purpose for reconciliation and peace
- **Application:** As Christians, we must pursue peaceful resolutions to conflicts, prioritizing reconciliation and unity within the body of believers.
- Our words and action should reflect the love and grace of Jesus, who reconciled us to God through His sacrifice on the Cross.