

What Lies Beneath?

James 4:1-10

Purpose of series: The purpose of this series is to assist you in taking off the limits of God's expression through you and in your life and His blessing on your life. The book of James reveals many practical duties and activities of Christian, that if not heeded will hinder God's expression through them and blessings on them, especially during difficult seasons of our life. This series will provide us with a practical view of how to live a life of spiritual impact and personal fullness in a difficult world under pressure.

Purpose of this message: There are many things that happen that we didn't plan for. Because of that we are often surprised with things that tip us and bring us frustration and anger. Why do we respond the way we do? What is it that drives our expressions, our acting out toward others. James says that there is something that lies within us. When this thing manifests within us there are problems, there are wars and there is trouble. James is telling us something that has the opportunity to happen in any church, among any believers, and he wants us to be aware of it. His hope is that we would not fall victims to what lies within us, but overcome these obstacles for the glory of God. James is wanting to get to the root of our very heart, what makes us tick as a compulsive sinner. His quick, to the point statements are filled with deep insight.

When Things Don't Go According To Plan: website called "Stupid People,"

#1: "**Karen Lee** Joachimmi, 20, **Lake City, Florida** for robbery of a Howard Johnson's motel. She was armed with only an electric chain saw, which was not plugged in."

#2: "Three guys decided, late one night, to rob a gas station. Baseball bats and knives:

- The clerk was an ex-Israeli. Army officer, unarmed-combat instructor.

#3: "When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street,

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"

James 4:1

- One of the Life Groups we highlighted, the Money Makeover Life Group.
- Story about a boy the differences between irritation, aggravation and frustration.

Irritation: Dad picked up the phone and dialed a number at random. "Can I speak to Alf."

Aggravation: Then Dad hit "redial" and asked for Alf a second time.

Frustration: "Then what's frustration?" "Hi, this is Alf. Do I have any messages?"

James is telling us there is a direct relationship with the irritations, aggravations and frustrations with people problems on the outside and the stirring battle ground that is taking place on the inside. Somewhere within us wars, struggles and arguments originate.

- A couple may say, "We are just not getting along."
- A person on the job might say, "I just can't get along with some of my coworkers."
- A mother may say, "I just can't get along with my kid."
- A kid might say, "I can't get along with my Mom or Dad or teacher at school."

There are irritations, aggravations and frustrations that lie beneath this cover of human flesh. **What we are going to learn today are both the causes and the cures for the irritations, aggravations and frustrations with others. We will learn the reason and the remedy.**

I love how James is always **direct** and **accurate**. **He tells us way before marriage counseling or psychiatric care was established what the problem with us is...I want something and so do you.** We struggle amongst each other, not only fight but win the war.

When is the earliest recognition of this kind of battle in your life? Just a kid.

"a brother is born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17)

"...a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."
Proverbs 29:15b

"Correct your son, and he will "give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul."
Proverbs 29:17

For the most part, some **conflicts are unavoidable but staying in conflict is avoidable!** **Marriage has built in conditions for conflict. I think about how idealistic...** All marriages, like any relationship goes through three stages:

1. Stage one is **the happy stage**, honeymoon stage, nothing could go wrong
2. Stage two, **the reality stage**, party's over and we discover our differences
3. Stage three, **the resolve stage**, it's where we learn to resolve arguments and conflicts,

Conflict On A Jesus Level

Matthew 26 when Jesus was in the **Garden of Gethsemane** where He was betrayed by Judas. It says that a **"multitude with swords and clubs" grabbed Jesus**, (Vs. 50), **talk about conflict!** The Bible says that **Peter picked up Jesus' offense**, (John 18:10) took his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest in defense of Jesus. Now I think that was a pretty gutsy move. Get the picture, a **multitude with swords and clubs!** I'd say, "You go Peter!"

"Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword."
Matthew 26:52

Jesus was saying, "If you war like man normally does with the sword, you will die like man.

"Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"
Matthew 26:53

Over 80,000 angels. Jesus was not struggling with this conflict because He was already committed to the process, the process His Father had sent Him to this earth for. Jesus has one goal in mind and one only, to live and fulfill the Word of God!

"But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"
Matthew 26:54

You can't fight like everyone else and fulfill the Scriptures. Conflict reveals what lies within you!

- If Jesus had conflict with God then this situation would have revealed it. Jesus would

- be saying, "Why are you always doing this to me?"
- If Jesus had conflict with the temple priest then He would have cried out to them about how they were about to screw up God's plan for their life.
 - If Jesus had conflict with the same mob that was probably at many of His miracles, this conflict would have revealed that bitterness in His heart and He would have lashed out of how two faced they were.
 - If Jesus had conflict with His disciples He probably would have yelled at the three who dozed off while He prayed. He could have put the guilt on them, "You could have prevented this if you would have prayed with me.!"
 - But He didn't. No He saw it as a teaching moment with Peter. It's like He was looking at Peter and He says, "Now what can we learn from this?"

A Picture Of Jesus

I find it interesting how John the Revelator gives us some insight as how to view Jesus,

*"...out of His mouth went a **sharp two-edged sword...**"*

Revelation 1:16b

In Revelation 19:11, Jesus is depicted riding a white horse, and "He" who sat on it was called "**Faithful and True.**" In the description that John gives of Him it says,

*"**Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations...**"*

Revelation 19:15a

Jesus was speaking to the angel of the church in Pegamos in Revelation 2:16

"Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

Revelation 2:16

What does this have to do with Peter and his sword? Jesus was telling Peter, we don't fight like this! We don't fight like the world, but with the Word of God!

Keeping The Future In Sight

Resolving conflict through Peter's eyes was different than resolving conflict in Jesus' eyes. Jesus saw the big picture, "there would be no hope for the world without Jesus going to the cross." As for Peter, he could only see what was right in front of him.

- My relationship with you is far more important than winning this situation
- "How much do you value your marriage?" You would say that it was priceless. But over time one issue compounded with another issue of unresolved conflict adds up to the point that it outweighs the essential value of your marriage.

What Resolving Conflict Does

Resolving conflict successfully brings an incredible amount of peace and unity to all of those involved.

1. **Greater Discovery of Each Other: When conflict arises it is assumed most of the time that we know everything about the other person and the other person knows nothing about us. A greater discovery of each other takes place when conflict is resolved.**

“The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.”

Proverbs 18:17

2. **Greater Duplicity of Each Other:** When a conflict is resolved correctly people are more united, more supportive and therefore more capable of accomplishing great dreams, having great faith and enjoying a great relationship with God.
3. **Greater Development of Each Other:** We learn that during the process of resolving conflict what is important to ourselves and each other. We learn what we hold sacred and what we believe and what our personal contribution, insights and giftings are.

The failure to resolve conflict has its results as well. It can become damaging and painful if avoided as much as if was done wrong. When conflict continues, the hopes and dreams cannot be fulfilled because you can't work as a team.

So James asks,

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?”

James 4:1

The Conflict

What causes this conflict? Do you realize that we are born with a fighting spirit? It is a drive within us that causes us to want to be passionate about life. Like Peter we can find people who will support our disapproval and support our angry decisions and before we know it we are singing along with Toby Keith, of course it has to be a tear jerking one called “Who's That Man.” Toby sings about driving by his ex-wife's house and says,

**That's my house & that's my car
That's my dog in my back yard
There's the window to the room
Where she lays her pretty head
I planted that tree out by the fence
Not long after we moved in
That's my kids and that's my wife
Whose that man, runnin my life**

Why is there fighting among you? Because something lies beneath.

In James Dobson's book *'Love Must Be Tough,'* there is an illustration how deeply this issue is affecting our society. **He tells of a sixth-grade teacher who gave her class a creative writing assignment. Each was asked to complete a sentence that began with the words "I wish."** The teacher expected the boys and girls to express wishes for **bicycles, dogs, television sets and trips to Hawaii.** Instead, **twenty of the thirty children** made reference in their responses to **their own disintegrating families.**

- I wish my parents wouldn't fight and I wish my father would come back.
- I wish my mother didn't have a boyfriend.
- I wish I could get straight A's so my dad would love me.

- I wish I had one mom and one dad so the kids wouldn't make fun of me.
- I wish I had an M-1 rifle so I could shoot those who make fun of me.
- **Fightings**- a war, a fight, a battle, a dispute, strife, quarrel,
- **Quarrels**- a fight or combat, of those in arms
- **The picture drawn here is one of a continuous battlefield where both sides keep strategizing for victory.**

What Lies beneath?

The New Testament says it is called **lust** – the Greek word is *epithumeite*- This word refers to a **strong desire or craving**. The conflict that this creates wars with someone else.

Three basic ways how this lust manifests and causes conflict with those we know and love. What are these three manifestations?

1. The Manifestation of Want

*"You **want** something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot **have** what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God."*
James 4:2

Hurricane Ike is the ninth named storm, fifth hurricane and third major hurricane of the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season. Hurricane Ike was considered a **Cape Verde-type hurricane**. It is an Atlantic hurricane that **develops off the west coast of Africa**.

We want things. We like to own things, use things and have things.

TV commercials. The Gallup poll stated that **56% of all marriages that end in divorce end because of money problems**. Things become a battleground.

Howard Hughes, "How much does it take to make a man happy?" And his answer was, "**Just a little bit more.**"

This manifestation of want leaves you empty. One more thing!

2. The Manifestation of Feel

*"When you **ask**, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your **pleasures.**"*
James 4:3

Another way for my lust to manifest is for my feelings to be the main driver in my life. I want to feel good. See, it's not wrong to enjoy life,

*"...**God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.**"*
I Timothy 6:17

Carol and I were talking about the difference in self denial and legalism.

When the lust of pleasure manifests itself in us we believe we need things when we really just want things.

The lust that lies deep within me can manifest to want and to feel and the third one,

3. The Manifestation of Being

"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."

James 4:4

This is the want of being known, popular, have power and prominence. It is wanting to be the one and only, to outdo all the competition.

As a **little kid** on the play ground we get our parents attention by saying, **"Watch me."** And then as we grow up we buy things that screams, "Watch me." Watch me in these **new clothes**. Watch me in this **new car**, or **house**, or **job**. Look right here...at me!

The God Lust

The problem with the three manifestations of lust always can lead to greater problems.

"Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

James 4:5-6

James is saying that something else is going on inside of you if God's Spirit has been deposited within you. There are stirrings. It "envies intensely."

"Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice."

Proverbs 13:10

See, I'm too proud to let you lead me. I'm too proud to allow you to accommodate you.

See, in Verses 2-3 it says that **"we do not have for two reasons,**

Two Reasons You Do Not Receive

1. We Don't Pray

"My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"

Philippians 4:13

2. We Have Pride

Pride causes us to have conflict with other people and with God.

What's The Cure? HUMILITY

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

James 4:6

God detest selfishness and pride and He sets Himself up against it.

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

James 4:10

Do you know what grace is? Grace is God's power to change things for the good of the person. What do you think God would like to change about you? Whatever it is, you need grace to do it.

"God, I need your help." And that's where we get the power to make the

changes we'd like to see."

Sound Advice

As we read on in James we find the next few verses are short sentences of sound advice.

1. GIVE IN TO GOD

"Submit yourselves, then, to God."

James 4:7a

I learned years ago that if I am in charge, I make mistakes which leads to great disappointment. But when He is in charge, He makes no mistakes and leads me to great opportunities.

This is the starting point. See, the real conflict within you is, "Who is in charge?"

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart."

Colossians 3:15

2. GET WISE TO SATAN

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

James 4:7b

The word "resist" is a war term. It means to be prepared. To stand against.

"In order that Satan might not outwit us, we are not unaware of his schemes."

II Corinthians 2:11

3. GROW CLOSER TO GOD

"Come near to God and he will come near to you."

James 4:8a

Reading the Bible, entering in to worship, praying, going to church and fellowshiping in a LifeGroup help you grow closer to God. Grow closer to God.

"He will keep him in perfect peace all those who trust in Him, whose thoughts turn often to the Lord."

Isaiah 26:3

When I spend time with the Lord, my thoughts are turned toward Him, and then I get along better with others because He keeps perfect peace in your heart and you're not as irritable.

The conflict in your life is in direct proportion to the time you're spending with God.

There is a great promise here too. When I in genuineness draw close to God, *"He will come near to you."* He doesn't back off. He draws close to you.

You give in to God, get wise to Satan, draw close to God and then...

4. GO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

If you want to stop the conflicts in your life, if you want to get along with other people, avoid arguments, learn to ask forgiveness from God and from those you hurt.

"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."

James 4:8b-9

Our hands represent our conduct and hearts represent attitudes.

Stop making excuses. Stop being lied to by Satan. Stop allowing pride to rise up in you. Now is the time to be sorry for your sin and your self-centered past. You come to God and ask for forgiveness.

Do you want to stop this conflict in your life. This warring that continues to destroy everything?

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

James 4:10

The way to honor God is humility. Come and say "God, I give up. I can't do it all on my own. I need Your power to resist the devil when he says, Live for yourself." I grow closer to God and spend time with Him and I'm willing to ask forgiveness.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, [Why? because pride causes arguments] but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest but also the interest of others."

Philippians 2:3-5

Which of these desires cause the most conflict in your life? Is it the want, to feel or being someone well known? Everyone suffers when the Spirit of God is not being manifested in your life.

Conclusion: It is time to let the Holy Spirit get involved in your life. To allow Him to come in we must humble ourselves to Christ. We want to lay all pride down, humble ourselves at His feet. We want to resist the temptation from Satan to think that we can put this off, deal with this later, put it on the back burner. We need to let this sink deep into our own spirit. It may make us cry, it might make us morn and grieve. But we need to be confronted with the truth of our own heart and the truth of God's Word. And lastly we need to ask for forgiveness for our actions, unclean hands and hearts. The pride that causes us to hold back is not worth it. We do not want to be opposed by God. We want His truth and His power to work on our behalf...His grace! To do that, humble yourself, knell at the feet of Jesus and pour your heart to Him!