



Dealing with Conflict

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What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 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. 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: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. 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. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Brothers and sisters do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor? (**James 4:1–12**)

The Reason for Our Conflicts

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 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. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (**James 4:1–3**)

The Result of Our Conflicts

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? **(James 4:4–5)**

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **(Ephesians 4:30–31)**

The Solution for Our Conflict

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. 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. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. **(James 4:6–10)**

Brothers and sisters do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor? **(James 4:11–12)**

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **(Ephesians 4:32)**

Conflict Always Reveals Our Need for God

- 1) Describe what it's like for a child to throw a temper tantrum because they could not get what they want. Describe what it's like for an adult to do the same.
- 2) **Read James 4:1-3:** What does James say our motives are when we get into a conflict? How have you seen conflict impact the lives of others? What is the effect on families, our society, and the world?
- 3) What are some ways that selfishness can creep into our lives without necessarily being noticed?
- 4) **Read James 4:4-5:** How does conflict result in unfaithfulness and hostility towards God. Do we think of it in this way? Why do you think God does? How does conflict grieve the Holy Spirit?
- 5) **Read James 4:6-10** James says God is opposed to the proud but gives more grace to the humble. How do grace and humility go together?
- 6) Talk about what it means to "Submit to God and resist the devil." Is there any significance to their order?
- 7) **Read Matthew 5:24:** How does this verse fit in with the issue of conflict? Why would Jesus say get right with your brother or sister and then come and give your gift?
- 8) How does conflict reveal our need for God?
- 9) Share where in your life do you need to deal with conflict this week. Is it with God or another person?
- 10) Pray for each other.