

CAUSES OF CONFLICT: ROUND ONE

JAMES SERMON SERIES

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JAMES 4:1-4



GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

Q: *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?* 4:1a

A: *Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?* 4:2b

- The source is **within** – 4:1
What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

- 'passions' – *hedone* = Hedonism: the pursuit of pleasure; sensual self-indulgence.

Titus 3:3

*"For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and **pleasures**, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another."*

Luke 8:14

*And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and **pleasures** of life, and their fruit does not mature.*

- God has given us many legitimate pleasures (friends, family, food, sex, etc.) but they are to be enjoyed in their proper season and relationship to God. Any 'good' thing can be twisted into something evil.

- Environment can *affect* behavior but does not have to *determine* behavior.

- Misplaced **passion**: self-centered coveting leads to fighting and quarreling – 4:2a
You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

- Self-seeking leaves no **time** for seeking God – 4:2b

- Self-seeking **prayers** will not be answered – 4:3

- Misplaced **loyalty**: Friendship with ideas that oppose Christ is a declaration of war against God – 4:4
You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James is not condemning befriending ungodly persons (Jesus was a friend of sinners) but joining hands with ideas that defy God. Why? Because the ideas we adopt influence our thinking and our thinking influences our actions and our actions show or blow our witness to a world without hope.

Probing questions:

- What gives you your sense of value and self-worth?

- Whose approval are you seeking above all else?

Walter Kaiser, "If you are deeply invested in the values of your culture, you cannot have enough energy left over to have a similar investment in God and his values. If you are invested in God, you do not at the same time have the energy left to value what the surrounding culture values."¹

- What about Christ causes you shame? If there are none, then what causes you to compromise?

- What is draining you of the passion for Christ you once had?

Q: What needs to change?

A: ?

¹ Walter Kaiser, *Hard sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), in *Logos Library Systems* [CD-ROM].