

God Time Day 1: Source of Conflict: Selfish Passions



Read James 4:1-4 on page 24.

It's easy to have arguments over little things that have no eternal significance. Disagreements over carpet colors, decor styles, and coffee flavors are sad realities that exist within many churches. Often, what starts as something minor ends with hurt feelings and damaged relationships. But it doesn't have to be this way. James explains to the church that when these fights and quarrels happen, it is because our passions are at war against us. (James 4:1) We will be looking at the remedy to this problem throughout the week.



Think of a time when you experienced disunity and broken relationships over something that started as relatively small and insignificant. Have you ever been hurt that way?



Spend time in prayer for our church. Ask God for unity to begin with you.

God Time Day 2: Other Sources of Conflict



Carefully reread James 4:1-4 on page 24.

Not only are selfish passions the root of fights and quarrels, but friendship with the world is, too. James calls this "adultery." This worldliness results in disunity with our siblings in Christ because we care more about the things of the world than we do about godliness. How can we expect peace when we pursue our own way?



James 4:9-10 reminds us to "*mourn*" (repent/turn from sin) and humble ourselves. Why? Because disunity also happens when we exalt ourselves— putting our needs and desires first. And James 4:12 reminds us not to judge others. Why? Because judging divides people into categories (e.g., the wealthy, the uneducated, etc.). These practices create division and conflict.

How often do you give in to worldliness, pride, or judging others? What effect can this have on our church?



Again, ask God for unity to begin with you.

God Time Day 3: Peace in Purpose



We've looked at how disunity in the church develops. But, what's the flip side? Today we'll look at how we can create unity by finding peace in our purpose.



Read James 4:6-8 on page 24.

When we submit to God, draw near Him, and purify our hearts, we set before us the eternal mission of the church. This allows a natural sense of prioritization to happen. But what is the eternal purpose of the church? Why does the church exist?

- A. To give me coffee on Sunday?
- B. To give me a feel-good sermon?
- C. To glorify, exalt, and share Christ?



Read James 4:11-12 on page 24.

When we are busy doing the negative things that James mentions in these verses, we are wasting the time that could be spent on the positive things listed in point C above.

Reread verse 11. Underline what James warns us against.



Why should we not be acting as a judge?

The reason that James warns against this is given in the latter part of the verse. When we speak evil against others, we deem "*the law*" (God's instructions) as unimportant. We take God's place and become our own gods!



Reread verse 12. Circle how many true lawgivers and judges there are. Underline what He can do.

So, rather than think we know better than God, we do well to humbly pursue unity with other Christians by focusing on the eternal mission of the church. We should be teammates dedicated to living like Christ and making Him known!



Pray over what you need to do in response to today's verses.

God Time Day 4: Remember How Blessed We Are



Rewrite James 4:7-8 on the lines below.

A faith that stays on mission is one that keeps God in focus, submitting and drawing near to Him. When we look at what God is doing, has done, and wants to do, we can't help but remember our blessings. Looking for God's blessings isn't a natural thing to do, but it is a wonderful spiritual exercise.



What good things has God done in our church over the past few years?

What good things has He done in the past few months?

What about in the past few days?

Unity and growth go together. Growth within the church often awakens the devil – and he will attack. We do not need to be caught off guard; we simply need to draw closer to God. When we draw near to God, the devil will flee! Counting our blessings is a great way to keep our focus on God.

God Time Day 5: Keep the Purpose in Focus



Read Isaiah 26:3 (NLT).

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

The Believers in James' day were about two short decades away from a major war: the Jews against the Romans. Jerusalem would be sacked in the year AD 70, and as we've learned, this letter was written around AD 45. James didn't know exactly what the future held, but like everyone else, he could easily look around and see the tension. Sadly, the tension outside of the church often finds its way inside.

As we discussed on Day 1, it's easy to let petty arguments feel important. Add to that the tension we carry in from outside the church and it's almost like we're facing two wars. One is with the enemy, and the other is "friendly fire." We can, and need to, do better!



What will you do today to pursue peace? (E.g., forgive, let go, confront, be more gracious, etc.)



Who do you need to talk to?

What do you need to start or stop doing to pursue peace?



Spend time in prayer over what you've written down.

Then do what you've written.

It's important to know that reconciliation and restoration take two, so if the other party is not ready, these may not happen. Yet, forgiveness is always a necessary step to pursuing peace.



Peace is fragile. Our enemy is happy when it breaks. Focus on the eternal purpose and pursue peace today.