

October 11, 2020
The Bridge Bible Fellowship
Pastor Paul S. Brown
James 4:1-10

“Be a True Friend of God!” – Part 1

Church fights have been going on since the first century. Much of the New Testament either describes fights in the church or is written to address fights in the church. Today people are fighting over and splitting churches over politics and Covid-19 regulations. Jesus prayed for His disciples to be one (John 17:20-23). Why are we so easily fractured in both our personal and corporate relationships? Who is ultimately to blame? How can we overcome this problem and experience genuine peace and righteousness in our relationships?

IX. Be a true friend of God (4:1-10)

Note the connection between James 3:13-18 and 4:1-10.

Written to unbelievers or believers?

A. The Earthly Problem (1-5)

1. Q & A #1 (1-3) – Battle with yourself

Is it ever appropriate to fight in the church? (Mt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; Titus 3:10; 1 Tim. 1:18; Jude 3; Gal. 2)

Quarrels & conflicts (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 2 Cor. 12:20; Phil. 4)

Pleasures – Greek *hēdonē* (Lk. 8:14; Titus 3:3; 2 Peter 2:13; James 4:1, 3)

Not all pleasures are bad (Ps 149:4; 37:4; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon; Prov. 5; 1 Tim. 4:4-5; Ps. 16:11)

Constant battle with pleasures / lusts (Rom. 7-8; 1 Pet. 2:11; James 1:13-15)

Murder? (2 Sam. 11-12; Mt. 5:21; 1 John 3:15)

Prayer?

Some don't pray at all

Some pray with wrong motives

God not listening (Ps. 145:18; 66:18; 18:41; Prov. 1:28; 28:9; Is. 1:15)

God listening (1 John 5:14-15)

So what?

1. Do you ever have fights with others? Mentally? Emotionally? Verbally? Physically? Identify the source! Look within.
2. What brings you pleasure? Has it become an idol? Are you over-indulging? Is God your greatest pleasure?
3. How is your prayer life? Content? Motives?

Discussion & Application:

1. Studying James can sometimes feel like we have been in a 10-round UFC fight. What are your **top 5 reasons** for why we should do such an in-depth study of a book that confronts and convicts us so deeply?
2. After our study in James 3:13-18, what are **three specific areas of your life** where you find yourself living according to the wisdom from below? What do you need to do to live out the wisdom from above in those specific areas?
3. What is the **connection** between James 3:13-18 and James 4:1-10?
4. Was James writing primarily to **believers** or **unbelievers** in this section? Why do you believe that?
5. Why does James use such **graphic words** when he describes their sinful behavior? (quarrels & conflicts; Hedonism; murder; adulteresses; sinners; double-minded...) What value is there in using such shocking words? What are some ways people soft pedal their sins to justify their behavior? Why is James calling them on the carpet like this? What possible motivation would he (or any true pastor) have for being so direct and confrontational?
6. **What is the connection between our pleasures and the conflicts we experience with other people? Read Matthew 7:1-5.** When we have a problem with someone else, where do we look first? Why? How does it help us stop fighting and start helping the other person?
7. Think through some conflicts, arguments, moments of exasperation, jealous thoughts you have experienced with other people recently. What was really going on inside of you? **What pleasure of yours was being blocked?** How did you respond to it? What did that reveal about your heart? What could you do differently in the future when faced with a similar situation that would be a blessing to the other person and bring glory to God? How might you specifically promote peace and righteousness in that same circumstance in the future?
8. What does our **lack of prayer** reveal about us? Why might a person not ask God to fulfill their desire for specific pleasures? Give some examples of pleasure people deeply want but wouldn't dare ask God to provide them? What does that reveal about the path they are pursuing (from below or from above)?
9. What does the **content** and **motive** of our prayers reveal about our hearts? With that in mind, read **Matthew 6:5-15**. Highlight the wrong content & motives vs. the right content and motives that Jesus reveals in relationship to prayer.
10. If some other pleasure has taken the place of God, it is called **idolatry**. Read **1 John 5:20-21**. Why end the book with a command to guard themselves from idols?
11. Do an honest **evaluation** of your heart. Ask the Lord to reveal the pleasures you are seeking that are causing conflicts between you and others. Be very specific in identifying them. Then honestly evaluate if you truly desire God more than anything else. John Piper says, "**The chief end of man is to glorify God BY enjoying Him forever.**" Is that truly the chief end of your life? How is this showing up in your daily schedule?
12. If you haven't already done so, **memorize James 4:1-10**. Recite it in the morning and at lunchtime. In the evening, go back over James chapters 1-3 to retain what you have already memorized.