

The Reason for Strife **James 4:1-6 (NKJV)**

1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

God is not create the world as we see it today.

When God made Adam and Eve they were at peace with one another.

If man had not sinned we would all be at peace with one another.

Cain would have never killed Abel and the flood would have never taken place.

But man did sin and rebelled against his loving creator.

And ever since mankind has been at odds with one another because we are at odds with God.

What a tragedy. God wanted only what was good and loving for mankind but they rebelled against the most loving being in the universe and brought only destruction upon themselves.

But Christians are able to overcome that problem because we are not at odds with God because of grace.

Christians know that they are sinners, that they have been wrong and they have repented and turned toward God for forgiveness.

But it works out in our lives only as far as we follow that grace that God has given to us.

So James turns his attention to the strife that exists between people.

And James also recognizes that if the grace of God does not rule in our hearts we too can be in a state of constant strife with one another, even other believers.

I. Where does strife come from.

A. James says wars and fights.

1. Man's history is filled with injustice.

a. It is not a single race's fault.

b. Because in countries there most people are of similar race there have still been strife.

c. Race aggravates it just as any other social distinction does.

- (1) Proletariat vs Bourgeois (bu 'rzh-'wä)
- (2) The company vs the laborer
- (3) The shop owner vs the clerk
- (4) The educated vs the craftsman or laborer
- (5) Those that live on the north side vs those on the south side
- (6) Or in the words of Dr. Seuss “the star bellied sneeches and those with no stars upon thars”
- (7) That is just how foolish it is.
- (8) Proverbs 16:18 Pride [goes] before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

2. There has never been a perfect peaceful society and if someone says there was they are selling something.
3. Man is a warring creature that has destroyed and enslaved his fellow man from the beginning.

B. They come from our desires for pleasure.

1. Why work for a TV if I can steal yours.
2. Why not just take whatever I can, if no one can stop me.
3. Some think Hitler was a mad man but he was just a man trying to fulfill his desires for pleasure by conquering the world.
4. Do you think that the Germans were especially wicked people.
5. They were just doing what man has done from the beginning.
6. That is the world we live in.
7. And the trouble is that it will not get better until Jesus comes.
8. Jesus said there would be wars and rumors of wars until they day that He returns.

C. The only thing that has restrained man’s ugly condition is the spread of Christianity, true Christianity.

1. That is why James is so upset with these people.’
2. It seems they have gone back to their old ways.
3. You see worldliness has an awful hold on human nature.
4. We even see hints of it among Christians when they allow sin to raise its ugly head.

- D. These things come from our members.
1. Not church members but members of our body.
 2. Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in **our members** to bear fruit to death.
 3. Romans 6:12-13 (NKJV) 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and **your members** as instruments of righteousness to God.
 4. Romans 7:23 (NKJV) 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in **my members**.
 5. Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? as pride, envy, covetousness, ambition, &c. which, like so many soldiers, are stationed and quartered in the members of the body, and war against the soul; for in the believer, or converted man, however, there is as it were two armies; a law in the members, warring against the law of the mind; the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and from this inward war arise external ones; or at least from the corruption of nature, which militates against all that is good, all quarrels and contentions, whether public or private, of a greater or lesser nature, and consequence, spring. *John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament, vol. 3, The Baptist Commentary Series (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809), 515.*
 6. Romans 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.
 7. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 (NKJV) 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;
 8. Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
 9. Galatians 5:24 And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

II. We Desire and do not have.

- A. Because we ask not.
1. 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.
 2. James gives two reason why people do not have what they desire.
 3. First they do not ask. Does that sound too simple.
 4. I thought God knew what we have need of even before we ask. And He does.
 5. But we are to ask.
 6. Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
 7. Luke 11:13 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”
- B. Because we desire things that will only fulfill our fleshly desires.
1. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
 2. People who grab for everything they can get and then hold grudges when they don't get what they want are hardly the type of people God listens to. *J.D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort, ed., New Commentary on the Whole Bible – New Testament: Based on the Classic Commentary of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1990), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Chapter 04".*

III. What is this called? **WORLDLINESS.**