

# The book of James

4:1-5

✚ **James 4:1** *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*

Welcome back to the study in James. Nice opening verse don't you think?

Maybe as you are reading this today you have just had an argument with your husband or wife. Maybe your parents or brother or sister or even a friend or???

When you read this you thought "*Great, just what I wanted to hear right now*"

It may not be what you wanted to hear, but possibly what you need to hear?

*"Yea Steve, but this is talking about wars. Not my argument with \_\_\_\_\_."*

Yes, it is speaking of war, but not only war, but fighting also. Fighting does not always have to be the physical one we may think of like boxing, but it can lead to the physical fighting.

But if you really think about it, any war started with one person angry with another, and in that anger, one person got others angry with that person or race of persons.

*"Yea but my argument will not start a war, it was just a disagreement with some yelling or just ignoring someone."*

I do agree, your argument may not start a war, at least not the war we think of with one nation against another. But it does cause a war or battle within yourself and your flesh against your spirit.

Think about it for a minute. When you have an argument with someone, even if it does seem to be resolved, don't you sit and ponder what was said and try to make the arguments of why you were right and he or she was wrong?

Soon you have justified your anger and will get angry all over again, or your anger will increase to the point that it's even harder to reconcile with that person.

So what has just happened?

There was a war within yourself, a struggle is happening between your flesh and your spirit. Your flesh is telling you that you are right and the other person is wrong, even if you were wrong, you still try to justify your wrongness to the point that you think you are right. What has happened is your flesh has just won the battle over your spirit.

On the other hand, you start to think and realize that you were wrong and desire to go apologize to that person, or you may realize that you were right but know that it's not worth the argument with someone you love and care about. So you go and make amends with that person, no longer dwelling on it.

What has now happened is God's Spirit has won over your flesh.

Yes, a war as we would think of war, probably won't happen, but a spiritual war does happen. So we agree that there are wars and arguments or fighting that happens all the time, so where do they come from or how do they get started?

James answer in the second part of verse 1 and onto verse 3.

✠ **James 4:1b-3** *Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 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. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

First off, James says that they are "*from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*"

Simply put, it's because you want something, or you want it your own way, unwilling to give in to someone else's desires. Even if their way is better, your own pride will not allow you to give in to others.

Maybe there is something you want from someone but they are unwilling to give into you. Possibly you want something done your way but they refuse and do it their own way. Maybe you are seeking them to ask for your forgiveness but they refuse to. The bible says this about arguing.

✠ **Prov 13:10 (NLT)** *Pride leads to arguments; those who take advice are wise.*

✠ **Matt 20:26-28** *"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

✠ **Prov 11:2** *When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.*

Paul speaks of this concerning forgiveness and Jesus Christ.

✠ **2 Cor 5:15 (NLT)** *He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.*

When we do not forgive, we are not living the life Jesus wants us to have. A new life that Jesus died for, so that we can have a life pleasing to the Lord.

But James says instead of living this new life in Jesus Christ: *You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war.*

Wars, fighting and arguments come because we desire things of this world, and when we don't get it we start to covet and even murder others in our hearts.

† **Matt 5:21-24** *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

Sometimes our prayers seem to go unanswered. I wonder if God can't hear you because of your anger and murder in your heart towards someone?

Jesus tells us to go to that person before we come to God and reconcile our differences, then come to God.

We pray to God and ask Him to humble us, while we have anger in our hearts towards others. If you want to break your pride, then humble yourself and seek that someone's forgiveness.

† **James 4:10** *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

James goes on to say.

✠ **James 4:2b-3** *Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

James is not speaking of asking from others, but rather asking from God.

We covet what others have and get angry with God if He doesn't give us the same thing. You have now made war with God, who should win, God or you?

*"But I really need it"*

Don't you think God knows what you need? If you really need it, won't God supply it for you? If God is saying no, maybe you don't really need it?

*"Yea, but we are talking about food and money for rent. Why hasn't God answered my prayers for more money or to supply my needs and the needs of my family?"*

First off, I can't answer for God, only give you what the scriptures say.

† **Phil 4:19 (NLT)** *And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*

How old are you, 20, 30, 40, 50 or older?

If you are, then you have made it this far and hasn't God always supplied for you? Maybe not the way you always thought He should, but if you are reading this then you have eaten for all these years, because you are alive and haven't starved to death. You have always had a place to lay your head to fall asleep. In fact, you have a computer and access to the Internet so you can read this. There are hundreds of thousands who don't have a computer or even electricity to plug one in even if they did have one. God does supply all our needs and beyond!

James gives us another reason why we don't get what we ask God for.

✎ ***You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.***

The key thing we seem to use for asking from God is, "If I had this I could do so much for you God, or would do so much for You God"

I've said this before and I must say it again. If you could do so much for the Lord with what you are asking for, does that mean you are doing something now for the Lord?

*"But I need the money or resources or the \_\_\_\_\_? To do for the Lord"*

All you need is a mouth and the ability to speak to do for the Lord. God is looking for those with a willing heart, willing to do with what they have. Only then will God give you more, as you are wise with what He has already given you.

*"I'm not liking this study Steve, I think I'll have to get my bible study from somewhere else, you just don't understand."*

I do understand what it's like to not have and be in want or need. I know what it's like to sleep in my car and cry out to God, "WHY". I know what it's like to open the cupboard and see nothing but dishes and no food. I do know what it's like to have the rent due and no money. But most important, I do know what it's like to fully rely on God. I do every day!

✠ ***Phil 4:11-13 (NLT) Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.***

James hasn't stopped yet; he goes on to say.

✎ ***James 4:4-5 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. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?***

When James says, “*Adulterers and adulteresses*” he is not speaking of the sexual one we think of, but rather our adultery is with the world and the things of this world. Leaving our bridegroom, Jesus and chase after the things of this world.

Do you desire the things of this world so much that, you are willing to turn your back on the Lord to get them? Are you willing to befriend the world to gain the world and all of its possessions?

✠ **Matt 16:26** *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

This verse is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. If it was recorded three times by three different authors, it must be a very important statement.

So what would you really gain by winning an argument?

Would you win the favor of the world, or God?

James makes it very clear: *Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Last week I told you this study would be on pride and humility, and it is in a sense, but it’s more than that. I believe this study is something we all need, because Jesus prayed this prayer; I pray someday we will all fulfill it.

† **John 17:20-23 (NLT)** *I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony. My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father--that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are-- I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one. Then the world will know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as much as you love me.*

What about you, are you trying to fulfill this prayer of Jesus or are you trying to gain acceptance by being right or winning an argument?

Are you breaking up that oneness Jesus prayed for in the church?

The first question James asked in this week’s study was: *Where do wars and fights come from among you?*

We now know where they come from, but how do we avoid them or stop the ones we started? The answer is the same for both questions.

Take your eyes off yourself and put them on others and their needs.

You have heard the saying, “*If only you could walk a mile in my shoes.*” Which means if you could really understand what others are going through. People have good days as well as bad days. When they have a bad day it affects everyone around them.

† **1 Cor 12:26** *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

We are to love one another, whether they, or you are having a good day or a bad day.

To end this week’s study, I will leave you with these verses.  
May we all live by them and love one another as Jesus prayed we would.

† **Col 3:12-17 (NLT)** *Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*

*Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.*

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy, and may He give you a forgiving and loving heart towards one another!