

How To End Wars (cont.)

(James 4:1-12)

Have you ever heard of the “War of the whiskers” or the “War of the Oaken Bucket”? How about the “War of Jenkins’ Ear”? These were actual wars fought between nations, and you can read about them in most history books.

War is a fact of life, in spite of treaties, world peace organizations, and the threat of atomic bombs. Not only are there wars between nations, but there are wars of one kind or another on almost every level of life.

James talked about three kinds of wars going on and how they can be stopped. So let’s dive in.

1. The first war is with each other. (4:1, 11-12) “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desire that battles within you?” This speaks of personal wants and hidden agendas.

- Here is a prime example of how we can be at war with each other: Lot and Abram: Gen. 13. What’s the difference between the two?
- Fights were breaking out between Lot’s herdsman and Abram’s herdsman over grazing rights. Abram, being the head of the family, Abram gave Lot the first choice of the land.
- I don’t want you to miss what just happened here. Abram had the right and authority to put Lot on the back side of the desert but he didn’t. He let Lot choose from any part of the land he wanted. Do you have any idea how many wars among church folks that could be averted if we would just give up our right to be right? Philippians 2 says, “Your attitude should be the

same as that of Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.”

- Jesus had the right to rule over us without any grace but he gave that up so that we could be forgiven. This is what happens when you do it Gods way; Philippians 2 continues by saying, “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- If we make decisions based only on what we can see then we have shorted ourselves before we even get out of the gate.
 - Sometimes the obvious IS NOT the will of GOD!!!
- Abram got a word from God, Lot relied on his gut. How many times do we do that?
 - What were the results of the two decisions? Lot pitched his tent near Sodom and we all know how that turned out.
 - And look at Abram: Gen.13:14. That’s what inquiring of the Lord will get you....Gods BEST!
- Abram was older, wiser and much richer than Lot. Abram could have had any piece of land that he wanted but he preferred someone else’s needs over his own. A lesson we can all learn from Abram.
 - If you feel that you have been wronged, sometimes we need to stop fighting and realize that God is the one who does our fighting and he NEVER LOOSES!! That’s why the Bible says, “The battle is mine says the Lord.”
- When we prefer others over our selves, God gets the glory and we reap the benefits. Praise the Lord!!!!!!

- James mentioned several different kinds of disagreements among the saints.
- **Class wars (2:1-9)** How tragic is it when local churches get their values confused and cater to the rich, while they ignore, or even reject the poor. If peace in a church depends on things like the size of your pay check and the clothes that you wear, then the church is out of the will of God.
- The one common denominator, whether you are rich or poor is we all have our own personal wars. It affects us all.
- **Church Fights (1:19-20)** When they studied the Word, the results were not edification, but strife and arguments. Each person thought his ideas were the only right ideas and his way was the only right way. Selfish ambition ruled their meeting not spiritual submission.
- **Personal Wars (4:11-12)** the saints were speaking evil of one another and judging one another. Here again we see the wrong use of the tongue. Christians should, “speak the truth in love.”
- If the truth about a brother is harmful, then we should cover it in love and not repeat it. If he has sinned, we should go to him personally to try to win him back.
- TO speak evil of a brother and judge him on the basis of partial evidence and unkind motives is to sin against him and against God. We are not called to judges; God is the only one qualified for that.

- It is unfortunate that the saints are at war with each other. I believe the world looks at these religious wars and says, “Behold, how they hate one another.” No wonder Jesus prayed, “ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”
- But why are we at war with one another? We belong to the same family; we trust the same Savior; we are indwelt with the same Holy Spirit—and yet we fight. James answers this question by explaining the second war that is going on. But you will have to tune in next week for that one!!!

2. The second war is with ourselves

- James says, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?” The essence of sin is selfishness. Think about it. Eve disobeyed God because she wanted to eat of the tree and become wise like God. Achan caused defeat to Israel because he selfishly took forbidden loot from the ruins of Jericho.
- Selfish desires are a dangerous thing because they lead to wrong actions and they even lead to wrong praying. James 4:3 “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”
- “Thou shalt not covet” is the last of God’s Ten Commandments, but its violation can make us break all of the other nine. Selfish living and selfish praying always lead to war. If there is a war on the inside, there will ultimately be war on the outside.

- People who are at war with themselves because of selfish desires are always unhappy people. Instead of being thankful for the blessings they do have, they complain about the blessings they don't have. They are always looking for that magic something that will change their lives, when the real problem is within their own hearts.
- Sometimes we use prayer as a cloak to hide our true desires. We will say things like, "But I prayed about it." Instead of seeking God's will, we tell God what He is supposed to do, and then we get mad when He disobeys our expressed will!!
- This anger with God eventually spills over to being angry with God's people in the church. Many church and family problems could be stopped if we would only look into our own hearts and see the battles raging there.

3. The last war is with God

- The root cause of every war, internal and external, is rebellion against God. When sin entered the world it created conflict. So how do we declare war with God? James names three enemies that we must not join hands with if we want peace with God.

1. The World. By the world James means human society apart from God. Abraham was a friend of God and Lot, his nephew was a friend of the world. Lot ended up in a war and Abraham had to rescue him.

- Friendship with the world is compared to adultery. Think about it. The Christian is married to Christ and should be faithful to him. The prophets Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Hosea used this analogy when they rebuked Judah

by adopting other nation's sinful ways. Judah began to worship other gods and committed adultery against God.

2. The second enemy James named is "The Flesh." This means your old nature that is prone to sin. The flesh I'm talking about is not the body. The body is not sinful; the body is neutral. The Spirit may use the body to glorify God, or the flesh may use the body to serve sin.

- So the Spirit and the flesh are in conflict with each other. This is that "battle with in you that James 4:1 talks about. Romans 8:7 say "The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to god; it does not submit to god's law, nor can it do so."

3. The last of the three enemies of God that we must avoid is the Devil.

- Pride is Satan's great sin and it is his best weapon that he uses against the Christian and the Lord. God wants us to be humble but Satan wants us to be proud. Satan said to Eve, "you will be like God if you eat of the fruit" and she believed him.
- Satan loves to inflate the ego and encourage us to do things our own way. One of the problems with our churches today is that we have too many celebrities and not enough servants.
- **James tells us there are three things we must do to have peace with God instead of war.**

1. Submit to God. This is a military word that means get into your proper rank. If there is any area of your life that is kept back from God, then there will always be conflict. The way to resist the Devil is to submit to God and submission is an act of the will!!

2. The second thing we must do to have peace with God is draw near to Him.
James 4:8 “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

- God draws near to us when we deal with the sin in our lives that keep him at a distance. He will not share us with anyone else, he must have complete control of our lives. A double minded Christian can never be close to god.

3. And the last thing we must do to have peace with God is humble ourselves before God. James 4:10 “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”

- The mark of true humility is facing the seriousness of our sin and dealing with our disobedience. I’ve heard people pray “humble me Lord” but that is a dangerous prayer. It is much better if we humble ourselves before God than it would be if he had to bring difficulty to us to bring us to a place of humility.

If we obey these instructions then God will draw near, cleanse us, and forgive us and then the wars will cease!!! We will not be at war with God, others and ourselves.