

The Fight Behind Our Fights

Pastor Jeff Bucknam | James 4:1–10

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help with group discussion. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. Soli Deo Gloria.

ICE BREAKER:

When was a time that someone apologized to you or resolved a conflict in a way that you distinctly remember?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:

What are some conflicts in the early church based on what we have already read in James? What are conflicts now in the church?

What does repentance mean? What does repentance look like in verses 6-10?

CONNECTING TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL:

How should the Gospel — that Jesus died for our sins and gave us the free gift of eternal life — change how we have conflict with others?

How should our relationship with the world — its values, beliefs, and people who don't know Christ — change after coming to faith in Him, according to James? (2 Corinthians 6:14-16, Matthew 5:13-16)

LIVING OUT THE TRUTH:

In what ways has 'friendship with the world' (v. 4-5) crept into your life? How has this affected your relationship with Christ? Think of some worldly things you have been prioritizing over Christ and share them with your group. Ask your group to hold you accountable.

Why is repentance important to the Christian life? How does the possibility to 'draw near to God' (v. 8) and eventually being exalted by God (v. 10) give us hope in the midst of repentance? In what ways can repentance draw you closer to the Lord and away from friendship with the world?

PARENTING MOMENT AND FAMILY FOCUS:

Sit down together as a couple or family and talk about the moments when selfish desires — wanting control, comfort, or to be right — cause tension at home. Encourage everyone to share what their conflicts might reveal about what's ruling their hearts. Be willing to admit where pride or impatience has shown up, and remind your kids that repentance isn't shame — it's returning to a loving Father who gives more grace. Pray together, confessing any sin, thanking God for His forgiveness, and asking Him to fill your home with humility, patience, and peace.

FURTHER STUDY:

Two articles at DesiringGod.org: 'Knowing the Nature of Your Evil,' & 'Make Satan Know His Defeat.' Also, two articles at Crossway.org: '10 Key Bible Verses on the Devil,' & '5 Ways the Holy Spirit Enables Us to Live in Unity.'

QUESTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK'S SERMON: James 4:11-17

This page gets us into the text for the next sermon. The more familiarity we have with God's Word, the better we can see God and all that He has for us.

In the days leading up to next weekend, set aside a few minutes to read the text and reflect on these questions. A prayer to start: 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law' —Psalm 119:18

1. What does it mean to speak evil against a brother?
2. Why is it important to not speak evil against a brother?
3. How does speaking evil against a brother lead to speaking against — and judging — the law?
4. How do verses 13-16 frame the way you think about planning your life?
5. What in this text confuses you?
6. What in this text compels you?
7. Accountability should always result in building others up. Read these texts; how do they encourage you to build others up? 1 Peter 4:8-10; Ephesians 4:29; Hebrews 3:13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10. Write one down to be a memory verse or memory text for this week, and pray for God to equip you as you encourage those around you.