

Small Group Questions On the Edge: Fight or Submit

1/22/12

Read James 4:1-12

James writes it plainly enough that we quarrel and fight because our desires aren't met. Is he right? Consider the last quarrel/disagreement you had with your spouse, friend, sibling, etc. Can you trace it back to something you wanted but weren't getting?

Think of the various arguments/quarrels that happen around your house. Can they be traced to individuals thinking primarily of themselves? How might you use these passages to help yourself and others in your family?

Often times our inner desires that create so much conflict, are difficult to identify because they are disguised as a "perceived right". Something we consciously or subconsciously feel we deserve. We then get angry and argue with each other when that right is violated or denied. Consider the following list of perceived rights:

- Right to have and control personal belongings
- Right to plan and control your day
- Right to be understood or heard
- Right to be appreciated, to belong, be loved, or be accepted
- Right to be treated fairly, or be respected
- Right to good health
- Right to be married and/or have children

Can you trace any internal strife and/or past arguments to these or other rights you think you have? What rights do we have before God?

What verses could you memorize to help you stop thinking in terms of your rights and start considering God's will and his promises?

Often our pursuits, no matter how innocent, can become the desires that battle within us that James refers to. Things like hobbies, relationships, material goods, money, vocation, food, drink, sports, the desire for power or control etc, can all compete for the throne of our heart and focus of our affections. Are there competing loves in your life that impair your conscience, obscure your pursuit of God, cause you to give in to your flesh, or make you more worldly and quarrelsome?

Consider the question above, what do you need to do about them?

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Pastor Ben Wangler

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In verses 11 and 12 James is quick to make us aware that when we manage to get our focus off ourselves and onto others, we can easily distort that as well, and become judgmental. Have you ever noticed this in yourself? Consider also that there are multiple judgments we have to make every day about people and their actions. What kind of judgment is James referring to? Can you find other scriptures to support that?

As in nearly every character issue in life, the remedy to these conditions in ourselves is to become more God centered and less self-centered. Read closely verses 4-12, list what the text says about God, about what to do and what not to do.

Consider each of these carefully, and using what you have worked through from previous questions, write out how you can combine it all to draw closer to God.

We all want to be _____!

How to forfeit greatness and destroy my relationships in the process:

- 1) Give full vent to my _____. (v2)
- 2) Trust myself for _____. (v2)
- 3) Keep it all for _____. (v3)
- 4) Choose to get _____ with the way the _____ does it! (v4-5)
- 5) Build myself up by _____ apart. (v11-12)

How to be great God's way:

- 1) Submit my _____ to God.
- 2) Submit my _____ to God.
- 3) Submit my _____ to God.

Question: Will you *submit* or *fight*?