

War, enmity one with another, was not God's creative intent. War is too often a fact of life despite treaties, world peace organizations, even Russia's recent threat of nuclear weapon deployment. But there are wars of one kind or another on almost every level of life - even "gas wars" between gas stations! In our text, James discusses "war", specifically three types of wars and how they can be stopped.

James 4:1: "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?"

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**quarrels**" or in the Greek, "polemoi" meaning, "dispute; strife"; "**fights**" or "machai" meaning, "conflict; battle"; "**passions**" or "hēdonōn" meaning, "lust; sensual pleasure".
- **Literal Interpretation:** Where do you think this appalling strife and conflicts come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because in your lust you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word.

I. **WAR WITH EACH OTHER (vv. 1, 11-12)**

A. **EVEN AMONG CHRISTIANS! (v. 1)**

1. Surely "brethren" ought to live together in love and harmony - cf. **Psalms 133:1**
 - a. Yet often they do not: Lot quarreled with Abraham; Absalom created a war with his father David; The disciples argued over the greatest
2. Even churches in the New Testament often had problems...
 - a. At CORINTH - brethren were suing each other; competing in the public assemblies
 - b. In GALATIA - brethren were "biting and devouring" one another
 - c. At PHILIPPI - two women were having trouble getting along

B. **IN HIS EPISTLE, JAMES IMPLIES SEVERAL DIFFERENT KINDS OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS AMONG BRETHREN:**

1. Class wars - **James 2:1-9**
2. Employment wars - **James 5:1-6**
3. Church fights - **James 1:19-20; 3:13-18**
4. Personal wars
 - a. Notice **James 4:11-12**
 - b. Where we are admonished not to speak evil of one another, nor to judge (condemn) one another

II. **WAR WITHIN OURSELVES (vv. 1-3)**

A. **THIS IS THE REASON WE WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER! (v. 1)**

1. It is the "war in the heart" that causes the wars in the church and elsewhere!
2. Our desire for things to satisfy our pleasures (like power, possessions, etc.)

B. **SUCH SELFISH DESIRES LEAD TO...**

1. Wrong Actions (**v. 2**)
 - a. "**you murder...you fight and war**"
 - b. Perhaps not literally, but certainly so in God's sight - cf. **1 John 3:15**
2. Wrong Praying (**v. 3**)
 - a. The kind of praying that goes unanswered

- b. Because the prayers are for selfish motives

III. **WAR WITH GOD (vv. 4-10)**

A. **HERE IS THE "ROOT CAUSE" OF EVERY WAR, INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL**

- 1. Rebellion against God!
 - a. In some way: those at war with others...are also at war within themselves...because they are first at war with God!

B. **HOW DOES A BELIEVER DECLARE WAR AGAINST GOD?**

- 1. By being friendly with God's enemies!
- 2. James mentions three enemies we must not fraternize with if we want to be at peace with God:
 - a. The World (**vv. 4**)
 - 1. That is, human society that is contrary to God
 - a. Any conduct, belief, thought...
 - b. ...which is anti-God, anti-Christ
 - 2. To be a friend of such...
 - a. Makes one an enemy of God!
 - b. Makes one a spiritual adulterer or adulteress!
 - b. The Flesh (**vv. 1, 5**)
 - 1. The unlawful desires that would lead us away from God
 - 2. These desires wage war within us, but we must not give in to them - cf. **1Peter 2:11**
 - 3. Such desires are in direct conflict to what the Spirit of God would have us to be and do - cf. **James 4:5; Galations 5:16-26**
 - 4. To submit to these unlawful desires (works) of the flesh sets one contrary to God and His Spirit!
 - c. The Devil (**vv. 6-7**)
 - 1. Pride is Satan's greatest temptation
 - 2. When we give into pride, we become friends of the devil and enemies of God - **4:6**

C. **HOW TO ENJOY PEACE WITH GOD**

- 1. Submit To God (**v. 7**)
 - a. Literally, "get into your proper rank"
 - b. Unconditional submission: "Not my will, but Thine be done"
- 2. Resist The Devil (**v. 7**)
 - a. He is behind every war that we have
 - b. But if we just resist, then he will flee!
- 3. Draw Near To God (**v. 8**)
 - a. And He will draw near to us!
 - b. How do we do this?
 - 1. **"Cleanse your hands"** - Get your sins forgiven!
 - 2. **"Purify your hearts"** - Be single-minded in your devotion to God! (not double-minded, like a spiritual adulterer)
- 4. Humble Yourselves In The Sight Of God (**vv. 9-10**)
 - a. It's possible to submit outwardly and not be humble inwardly
 - b. True mourning for our sins (cf. **4:9**) is how we can humble ourselves before God
 - c. The end result of such humility? God will lift you up! - **4:10**

➤ **Conclusion: "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7)**