

James | The War Within and Without (James 4:1-10)

Outline

Main Idea: The war exists between people because the war already exists within people.

1. The Root of the War (vv. 1-3)
 - a. God offers peace through his wisdom
 - b. Yet, the people are experiencing turmoil and dissension
 - c. This is because of the war within us
 - d. This comes from our desire for pleasure that governs the moments and intents of our hearts.
 - e. Wanting what others have can lead to frustration and anger that you take into other situations.
 - f. Or we don't want to pray for things because we know God wants to change us before he changes our circumstance.
 - g. Or we don't receive what we ask for because we are praying out of greed.
2. The Product of the War (vv. 4-6)
 - a. We are an adulterous people because we give love that we owe to God to others.
 - b. God is the one perfect husband and thus he is rightly jealous when his people are unfaithful to them.
 - c. But instead of judgment God still grants grace to his unfaithful people.
3. How the War is Won (vv. 7-10)
 - a. The only appropriate response to God's goodness is that we humble ourselves before God and submit to Him. Then we receive his grace.
 - b. We must resist the devil by embracing who we are in Christ and standing in our identity in him. This is putting on the armor of God.
 - c. We need to mourn and repent before God.
 - d. Humble yourself before the Lord and he will exalt you.

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Discussion Questions

1. James begins this passage by explaining what the root of the division and fighting that the church was experiencing was.
 - a. What are the main ways that you are seeing or experiencing turmoil right now? How about inside the church?
 - b. What do you typically think is the root cause of it?
 - c. How does James' teaching in vv. 1-3 provide you with greater insight into what is behind the turmoil and dissension that you are experiencing?
 - d. How have your desires for what others have impacted your relationships with them and others?
 - e. What is something that you have been frustrated about that you haven't been praying for? Why haven't you prayed for it?
 - f. What is an unanswered prayer that you have that might be motivated by selfish desire?
 - g. How then do we approach these desires in God-honoring way?
2. James then explains how these desires lead us to be unfaithful to God.
 - a. What do you believe friendship with the world means? How is that being unfaithful to God?
 - b. What happens when people are disloyal or unfaithful to you? How do you respond to them?
 - c. How does the truth that even when God's people are unfaithful to Him he gives them more grace impact you?
3. We win this war against our passions and divisions by humbling ourselves before God and submitting to him.
 - a. What does humbling and submitting to God look like, practically speaking?
 - b. In what ways are you being challenged to humble yourself before God right now?
 - c. What does Jesus teach us about how to resist the Devil?
 - d. In what area has the Lord taught you how to resist the Devil and you have enjoyed victory? Where do you need to resist him right now?
 - e. What sin is the Lord teaching you to mourn over right now?