

LESSON 9

FIGHTS, QUARRELS, AND OTHER CHURCH PASTIMES

JAMES 4:1–12



1 Circle any of the following that describe the way people fight at your church:

hand-to-hand combat

hijacking and other terrorist activities

bayonets and rifles

intelligence and espionage

tanks, planes, and missiles

negotiated peace with occasional skirmishes

guerrilla warfare

cold war

sniper attacks

“Who, me? I didn’t do anything!”

booby traps and land mines

other: _____

2 What is your idea of a good, clean church fight?



Read James 4:1–12 and the following notes:

☐ 4:1–3 ☐ 4:2, 3 ☐ 4:3, 4 ☐ 4:4–6 ☐ 4:5 ☐ 4:7 ☐ 4:10

3 What are some reasons that Christians don’t get along with each other (4:1, 2)?

4 What are the wrong motives for prayer (4:3)? With what motives should we pray?

5 What does “friendship with this world” mean (4:4)?

6 How does James instruct us to deal with these problems (4:5–10)?

7 Why do people fight over issues at church?



James doesn't paint a pretty picture of life in the church. It sounds much like life anytime people are together: quarreling, fighting, slandering, judging. The difference is that there's hope for real change in the church. These problems arise when Christians exchange friendship with God for that of the world. As with all of Satan's treacheries, the world's friendship might sound good at first, but it will soon bring a harvest of sin, jealousy, hatred, and self-centeredness. The good news is that Christians have an alternative—to return to God in confession and dependency. God never tires of welcoming home his wayward children and of lifting them up when they humble themselves before him. If you find yourself constantly embroiled in disagreements and arguments, take a close look at your heart . . . and come home to friendship with God.

8 What is the connection between our relationship with God and our relationship with people?



9 Why is it impossible to be a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time?

10 What aspects of our modern world encourage and feed jealousy?

11 How might jealousy and friendship with the world occur even in a church?

12 What is involved in humbling yourself before God (4:7)?

13 Where have you sensed the devil's strongest attacks in your life recently?
How can you resist him?

14 Assuming that conflict is inevitable in this fallen world, what does it mean for believers to fight fair?

15 How can you learn to fight fair? How can you be less contentious?

16 Think of all the people with whom you are at odds now. Can anything be done about these situations? List the relationships that you feel courageous enough to work on.

17 Select one person from your list above. Keeping in mind the causes of disagreements mentioned by James, search your heart before God to see if one of them may be at the root of the problem. What could you do to begin to restore this relationship?



A Why does James call his audience “adulterers”? In what ways do believers today continue to be “adulterous”?

B When is it permissible for Christians to judge one another (4:11, 12)? What kind of judging is this passage talking about? When have you been guilty of judging?

C What does James teach in this section that would help us have a more effective prayer life? What hinders our prayers (4:3)?

D How does humility square with celebrating what Christ has done for us (4:9, 10)? What will happen if we do not humble ourselves?

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