

The Heart of Conflict

James 4:1-12

July 3, 2022 | Jason Finley, Lead Pastor for Equipping

BIG IDEA: God graciously redeems our conflict to reveal our sinful pride and lead us to humble restoration.

I. God graciously exposes our disordered desires. (vv. 1-2a, 11-12)

James 4:1-2 | “1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.”

“What controls our hearts will exercise inescapable influence over our lives and behavior.”

- Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

The progression of disordered desires:

Desire
 Demand
 Need
 Expectation
 Judge
 Punish

James 4:11 | “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.”

II. God graciously reveals our disordered worship. (vv. 2b-4)

James 4:2b-4 | “2b You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

“Our desire to set up our own kingdom is in direct conflict with the King who has come to rule in our hearts...[our] problem is that [we] give the love that belongs to God to someone or something else.”

- Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

III. God graciously pursues our wayward hearts. (vv. 5-6)

James 4:5-6 | “5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us’? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

“God has not ceased to love when he kills the mighty kings of pride. The ultimate aim of providence is the exaltation of the worth and beauty of God in the soul-satisfying praises of God’s people. Where pride exists, this purpose is not yet fulfilled. Therefore, pride-opposing providence is love.”

- John Piper, *Providence*

Romans 5:6-11 | “6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

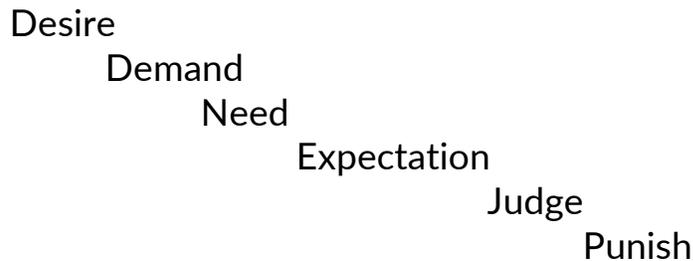
IV. God graciously restores us through repentance. (vv. 7-10)

James 4:7-10 | “7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

Luke 15:20-24 | “20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called

your son.’ 22 But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.”

The progression of disordered desires:



Locate your disordered desires:

- How am I punishing others?
- How am I judging others?
- What am I demanding to have?
- What is the root desire of that demand?
 - What do I *really* want?
 - What do I fear or avoid at any cost?
 - What unmet desires result in frustration, anxiety, bitterness, or depression?

Matthew 7:3-5 | “3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

John 13:35 | “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

James 4:10 | “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”