

CCC HOW TO AVOID ARGUMENTS P10 B

Developing a Faith That Works - Part 10

James 4:1-10

Read James 4:1-10

We're going to be looking at what James has to say us on “How to Avoid Arguments”. James starts off and doesn't beat around the bush. He gets right to the point. James 4:1 *"What causes fights and quarrels among you. Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?"* James says that the cause of arguments, the causes of the constant tension always around, the cause of your argumentative mode in your life is your conflicting desires. It is my conflicting desires meaning my wants conflict with your wants and when this happens, sparks are going to fly. God's word, the Bible makes it very clear that there are three basic desires we all have that causes conflict. Now

these desires in themselves are legitimate desires for us to have... until they are out of control, as a matter of fact these were going to look at in a minute are God-given desires. When God created you He gave you these desires. But when you put them above other people, when they become number one in your life, they will cause conflict. What are they?

1. THE DESIRE TO HAVE - We want to have things. Materialism. Possessions. In verse 2 he said, *"You want what you don't have ... you long for what others have."* Now lets start here, God created things and He created them to be used and to be enjoy. That's what they're there for. We use things and we love people. The problem is when we start loving things. When we start loving things we get the equation backwards. What we end up doing is we start loving things and using people – we start

manipulating them, controlling them, moving them around to get what you want... WHY, because things have become more important in your life.

2. THE DESIRE TO FEEL - I want to feel good. I want to feel comfortable. I want to have my senses satisfied. v. 3 *"You want only what will give you pleasure"* Now don't get me wrong... It's not wrong to feel good and be comfortable. 1 Timothy 6:17 *"God made everything for our enjoyment."* But when pleasure and comfort becomes the number one goal in your life -- if it feels good, do it -- guess what happens, you're asking for conflict in your life. You're asking for problems in your life. You're asking for that constant tension in your life. You're asking for that argumentative mode to be in your life. When my pleasure takes the place over what is needful in my life, there will be trouble.

3. THE DESIRE TO BE – God says those who want to be proud of Me, myself and have My power, My prominence, My popularity. Jesus said I came to serve and save... Now you go and do likewise. When this is out of order and we say, "I want to be number one." Frank Sinatra summarized it well, "I Did It My Way". We live in the "ME" times. Get on top no matter what the cost. Proverbs 13:10 *"Pride leads to arguments."* Have you ever been in an argument where you knew you were wrong but you wouldn't admit it? Why did you do that..? Because of pride and God's word, the bible says, pride causes arguments, the next time you're in an argument, stop and ask yourself... "Is it worth it?"

II. THE CURE FOR ARGUMENTS IS HUMILITY

v. 6 & 10 *"God ... gives grace to the humble. Humble yourself before the Lord, and he will lift you up."* What is

grace here? Grace is God's power to change. So, let me ask you a question. What would you like to change about yourself? Whatever it is, you need grace to do it. What do you want to change about your relationships with your spouse, your family, your co-workers? Whatever you would like to change, you need grace. Why grace, because you can't change it on your own. You need God's power and that's called grace. Grace is the power to change, and there is only one way you get grace. You humble yourself before the Lord. See, God doesn't give grace to people who are full of pride. God doesn't give grace to those who think in their minds, "I can do it on my own." Think about it... Why would He give it to you? God's word, the bible says He gives it to the humble, He gives it to those who surrender their ways to Him and say, "God, I need your

help, I can't do it." And that's where we get the power to make the changes we'd like to see.

In the next few verses, James gives several short sentences. He gives four specific and very practical actions that need to be taken in order to stop the fighting. Here's how you diffuse a conflict, whether it's between you and a child, you and your wife, you and your husband, you and someone at work. You do four things to diffuse a conflict:

1. **GIVE IN TO GOD** - *"Submit yourself then to God."* v. 7. Let God be God in your life. Give Him control of your life. Put Him in charge. Yield yourself to Him. This is the starting point. Quit trying to run your own life. In v. 1 it says *"...your desires that battle within you..."* James says the conflict that happens with other people happens because you have conflict on the inside of you. You don't get along with other people because you've got a civil war

going on inside of you. You got a battle going on inside. (Good Dog / Bad Dog) This is the real issue. You can't get peace outside if you're warring on the inside.

Colossians 3:15 *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart."* I want you to get this part... When you and I have the peace of Christ in our hearts then we'll be at peace with other people. (REPEAT) If you don't have God's peace in our hearts then you will always be trying to manipulate others, you will always be trying to control others. The Remedy, give in to God. This means you learn to say "Thy will be done" instead of saying "My will be done." That's the difference. When you can say "Lord, whatever You want that's what I want" then the peace process starts.

2. GET WISE TO SATAN - Be aware, be alert. Realize what he's doing. Realize where the conflict comes from and that he's the source behind it. Don't be ignorant about this.

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The word "resist" is a war term. It means to be prepared, to stand against, to withstand an attack. The devil wants to destroy your marriage. The devil wants to destroy your family. He wants to destroy every good and healthy relationship you have... Why? Because he loves conflict, he loves arguments, he loves for tension... he loves to have these always prevailing in your life. He wants to cause confusion, arguments, stress, hurt feelings, disappointment, anger, chaos in your life and he loves to do it. James says you've got to give into God, let Him have control and continue to follow His ways for your life. There is a great promise here. It says, *"Resist the devil and he will flee."* You don't have to put up with him. Give in to God and get wise to Satan. He has no power over you then that which you give him.

3. GROW CLOSER TO GOD - How does this affect arguments? First, how do you grow closer? By reading the Bible, by going to church and worshipping God, by getting involved in a small group or a Bible study -- all of these kinds of things help you grow closer to God. I have made an amazing discovery that the more time I, Bill Raley spend alone with God, in His word, talking to Him, praising Him, coming and worshipping Him here on Sunday's, going to Men's Ministry on Monday nights the better I get along with other people. Is it always easy to do these things... no, it is down right difficult. When the argument level rises in my marriage it means Edna-Wynne and or I... are not spending time with the Lord. We aren't spending time in His word and listen... It's just that simple to change it. God says do this and you can count on it changing! But sorry to say many people keep singing the

song by Frank Sinatra, I'll do it my way... as they sink into broken relationships, divorce, children rebelling. God says grow closer to Me and you can count on this changing.

Isaiah 26:3 *"He will keep him in perfect peace all those who trust in Him, whose thoughts turn often to the Lord."*

When you spend time with the Lord, you turn your thoughts to Him, then you get along better with others because He keeps perfect peace in your heart and you're not as irritable. Have you noticed some people only draw close to God when they're in trouble, or they have a need? You need to spend time with Him all the time. You need to be connected in a small group, or a Bible study, definitely Sunday morning worship, daily quiet time -- make time for these things. You say you're too busy? Then guess what... maybe you are too busy. Maybe you need to cut some things out of your schedule to make more time to spend

time with the Lord. The more you spend time with the Lord, the more you're going to enjoy the rest of your time. The more you spend time with the Lord the more productive, the more beneficial things will be. The more time you spend time with the Lord, you'll get along better with others, have fewer arguments, why, because you're spending time with God. "Draw closer to God and He'll keep you in perfect peace." Get up 15 minutes earlier each morning. Maybe start with the Gospel of John. Read and pray and notice the difference in your attitude and the relationships the rest of the day. I challenge you to do that. You will see a difference the very first day.

Listen God's word can't be any clearer to you and I here today... The conflict in your life is in direct proportion to the time you're spending with God. There is a great promise here for us. When I am genuinely drawing

close to God, When I am working it and what does that mean reading His word, coming Sunday's to worship Him, involved in a small group or bible study or something like that... "*He will come near to you.*" He doesn't back off. He draws close to you. When you move toward Him, God moves toward you. So we need to give in to God, get wise to Satan, draw close to God and then...

4. BE WILLING TO ASK FORGIVENESS - If you want to stop the conflicts in your life, if you want to get along with other people, if you want to avoid arguments, learn to ask forgiveness from God and from those you hurt. v. 8 "*Wash your hands ... purify your hearts...*" Our hands represent our conduct and hearts represent attitudes. He's saying, clean up your act. v. 9 (LB) "*Let there be tears for the wrong you've done.*" In other words, don't minimize what's happened. Don't minimize what you've done. You

need to take it seriously. It is a big deal when your wife's feelings are hurt. Take it seriously. It may not be a big deal to you, but it was to them and it is to God. Be willing to ask forgiveness.

Now... go back to that person I asked you to think about in the beginning of this message. Would you like to begin to resolve the conflict with that person? How do you do it? Are you willing to go and apologize for your part? Maybe they are 95% wrong and you're only 5% at fault, but you take care of your 5% and let God handle the other 95% in their life. Their response is their response. You say something like, "I know we've had our differences and I know I haven't always been thoughtful. A lot of times I've thought more about myself than your needs." WOW, how humbling that would be! And that's good... why that is good, because God gives grace to the humble! If you

want to change, the only way you're going to change is to be humble, and the only way to be humble is to go and ask forgiveness. It's hard, it's also your choice, but this is necessary if you want to change? Do you want to reduce the conflict? Maybe the way you do it is by cracking the door open by you taking the first step even if they are primarily at fault. Admit what you've brought into the relationship that was wrong. Is it humbling, sure it is, but God gives grace to the humble. Maybe this week you need to write a letter, make a call, make some restitution even to that person who's irritated you -- Take the first step. v. 10 *"Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up."* God doesn't want to keep you down on the ground. The way to honor is humility, with your spouse, your kids, everybody.

God's word, says *Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ.*" How do you get that attitude? Let Jesus Christ live through your life. When Jesus Christ lives in me and Jesus Christ lives in you, Jesus isn't going to argue with Jesus. Let go of the ego's There is no ego there with Christ.

In the first three verses of this chapter, four times it says you're unsatisfied -- "*you want but you don't get*", "*you strive for but you can't have*". You're unsatisfied. Many people in life are unsatisfied with the way they are living. The secret of satisfaction is in Jesus Christ. Give yourself to Him and find your needs met in Him rather than in other people and other things. He will never let you down.

Prayer: - Would you pray this prayer in your heart right now? "Lord, would you help me to think of others and not

just my own desires? Help me to be willing to admit when I am wrong." Maybe you need to go to somebody today and apologize. Say, "I've been selfish and I'm sorry." The Bible says, "*God opposes the proud but He gives grace to the humble.*" God will give you the power to change and become the person you've always wanted to be. The Bible says He lifts you up, before honor is humility. Then would you pray, "God, today I want to give in to You. I give You my life, my marriage, my career. I submit it all to You. I ask You to put the peace of Christ in my heart to rule. Help me to get wise to Satan, to realize he plays on my pride and tells me things I want to hear but really only make matters worse. Father, help me to grow closer to You, to make time in my schedule for time with You. Father, I admit that many times I've put me first and I ask You to forgive me. Help me to become like Jesus, to have

the attitude that He had, to not only look after my own interest but also the interest of those around me. Teach me to say, 'Thy will be done' instead of 'Me first.'" If you've never invited Jesus Christ into your life, do it. Ask Him to come in.

Lord, thank You for Your word. It's practical and it helps us in the very areas that we need it the most. Use this message today in our lives this week so we can have more peaceful relationships, less conflict, less strife, less arguing and more love, joy, and peace. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.