



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Teaching Title: Keys to conflict

Key Scripture: James 4:1–10

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Acts 15

Tuesday: Acts 21:17–40

Wednesday: James 4:1–10

Thursday: Matthew 18:15–35

Friday: Philippians 2

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

Conflict Resolution

MEMORY VERSE:

James 4:1 NLT

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you?

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

When facing conflict, it's often our first response to blame the other person. We are quick to point out what they did or said that hurt us. But James 4:1–10 tells us the root cause of our conflicts are unmet desires in our own hearts. Instead of pointing blame at others, we should begin by examining our hearts and motives. Often, the unmet desires in our hearts—like control, affirmation, or respect—fuel our responses and lead to quarrels. Instead of letting these desires control us, we are called to humbly submit to God and allow Him to transform us. Conflict, though inevitable, reveals our loyalties and whether we're truly aligning with God or with worldly thinking. The remedy is not external blame but internal change—through humility, repentance, and drawing near to God. Conflict resolution begins with self-examination.

Questions:

Icebreaker: What's your best scar story?

Read James 4:1–10 together as a group.

1. What does James say is the root cause of conflict? (4:1-2) As you reflect on past conflicts, what were the unmet desires that caused the conflict?
2. In 4:1-3, what would you say is the primary sin that James is addressing here?
3. Why does James refer to them as "adulterous people"? (See Digging Deeper)
4. In 4:4–10, James then calls his readers to repentance. He warns them about "friendship with the world." Do you think James is saying we can't be friends with unbelievers? What do you think he's saying? (See Digging Deeper)

5. What do you think keeps us from turning to God first in moments of tension or conflict?
6. In James 4:7–10, James lists 10 commands (or imperatives in the Greek tense). Can you find all of them? Why do you think James uses such strong language?
7. Why is it dangerous to address conflict while ignoring your own motives and desires?
8. Take time as a group to invite the Holy Spirit to reveal any unmet desires or divided loyalty in your life. Pray James 4:10 as a group—"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor."

DIGGING DEEPER

Question #3—

"The people of God in the OT are considered the wife of the Lord (Jer 31:32), and in the NT, the bride of Christ (Eph 5:23-32). It is reasonable, therefore, to understand "adulteress" as a figure of speech for spiritual unfaithfulness... For the believer, however, there are two objects for affection: the world and God. And these two are direct opposites. James uses the word *kosmos* ('world'), as do Paul and John, to refer to the system of evil controlled by Satan. It includes all that is wicked and opposed to God on this earth. James is thinking especially of pleasures that lure men's hearts from God. By its very nature, then, 'friendship with the world is hatred toward God.' To have a warm, familiar attitude toward this evil world is to be on good terms with God's enemy. It is to adopt the world's set of values and want what the world wants instead of choosing according to divine standards."

Also, when Israel broke their covenant relationship with God, they were called adulterers in the OT. See Isa 1:21; Jer 2:20, 3:1-3; Ex 16:15-17; Hos 1-3)

—Donald Burdick, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: James*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1981. pg. 193

Question #4—

James 4:5

"This verse is one of the most difficult in the epistle. Various translations have been suggested, but there is good reason to believe that the translation given in the NIV footnote for the last part of the verse is correct, 'that God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us.' ... Verse 4, which is closely tied to v5 by the conjunction 'or,' indicates that the believer who is a friend of the world is guilty of spiritual adultery. Although his love and devotion belong to God, he has fallen in love with the world. It is natural, therefore, to expect v5 to speak of God's jealous longing for his people's love, rather than of their envious spirit (Ex 20:5, 34:14)."

"The meaning of vv. 4-6 would then be that God has set a high standard for wholehearted love and devotion on the part of his people, but he gives grace that is greater than the rigorous demand he has made. This assurance is documented with a quotation from the OT. The point of the quotation, as James uses it, is in the second clause. The reference to the gift of grace looks back to God's demand for loyalty (v. 4-5). God in grace gives his people the help they need to resist the appeal of the world and to remain loyal to him.

—Donald Burdick, *The Expositors Bible Commentary: James*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1981. pg. 193-4