

LET'S GET RID OF WARS
(James 4:1-10)

I. The reason for wars (vs. 1).

- A. The word "wars" literally means to destroy much.
 - 1. It stands for all the problems we have.
 - 2. All the wars we have are under consideration.
- B. The word "fightings" refers to each individual battle.
- C. Much damage takes place when we enter into these battles.
- D. The reason for these wars is the inordinate desires that we have in our hearts.
 - 1. The things we want that are sinful cause us to have these wars.
 - 2. Our attitudes that are sinful and self-promoting are parts of the overall problem of the wars we fight.
- E. The desire to get what we don't have at any costs leads to wars with people and wars between nations.
- F. Our problems with one another usually stem from at least one party being jealous or envious of something the other party has.

II. The result of wars (vs. 2-3).

- A. We don't receive from God the things we want.
 - 1. Our prayers are hindered and communication is cut off from God when we are lusting.
 - 2. We are so consumed with obtaining whatever it is for which we are lusting that there is no way we can pray to God and expect Him to honor such a request.
- B. We can't get what we want from God because we are going about getting it the wrong way.
 - 1. We are busy fighting and killing.
 - 2. This is not literal killing but indicates the attitude that could lead to such and points out the depth of the sin in the heart.
 - 3. We get so caught up in our conflicts that we don't even bother to pray.
- C. When we do pray, our prayers are so full of covetousness that we can't get it from God.
 - 1. The things we want we can't have because we want them for the wrong reasons.
 - 2. The idea in the original language for the last phrase of verse 3 is that it would be wasted or squandered on us.
 - 3. God views things used for purely selfish reasons as wasteful and squandered.
- D. God will not grant the request that is based on selfishness and greed.
- E. We should realize that God is not angered when we ask for material gifts but when we ask for them for selfish reasons.
 - 1. We are to ask for bread and shelter.
 - 2. It is fine to ask for things that are needed as long as we have the right attitude as to how they are to be used.

III. The root of the problem (vs. 4-5).

- A. It all boils down to the fact that we are rebelling against God when we seek our own satisfaction or our own way.
- B. We are spiritual adulterers when we are covetous and jealous.
- C. Christians are in a spiritual marriage relationship with God.
 - 1. Any time we put something before that relationship we are committing spiritual adultery.
 - 2. This is something the Christians of Jewish descent would understand because of the history of the Jews.
 - 3. Many of the prophets charged Israel with spiritual adultery because of their turning from God to idolatry and other nations.
- D. Whenever we desire the things of the world for selfish reasons we are showing ourselves to be the enemies of God.
- E. The choice is obvious from this verse: we choose the world or God and there is no in between.
- F. When we act this way, we show we don't have a proper understanding of sin.
 - 1. When we think it is okay to place something before God we don't understand God's relationship with us.
 - 2. When we involve ourselves in worldly matters we show our understanding of sin is non-existent
- G. We are literally making ourselves adversaries of God when we act his way.
- H. James then appeals to their knowledge of the Old Testament by referring to one of the basic tenets taught in the Law:
 - 1. Man has a desire to have the things of the world that we must fight or it will overcome us.
 - 2. This is the meaning of verse 5.
 - 3. Within us is the desire, that we must continually battle and put down, for earthly pleasures and wealth.
 - 4. There is no one passage that teaches this but it is alluded to in several passages.
- I. The root of all our fights and wars is a rebellious nature towards God.

IV. The remedy for wars (vs. 6-10).

- A. The only remedy for sin is the grace of God and the only way to get into God's grace is by humbling ourselves.
 - 1. It's like James is anticipating the response of the people to whom he was writing.
 - 2. We are enemies with God, there must be no hope.
 - 3. James says there is great hope because God gives more grace.
 - 4. God continually resists the proud but continually gives grace to the humble.
- B. The way to appropriate that more grace is laid out by James.
- C. We submit to God and resist the devil.
 - 1. We must place ourselves under God and fight off the attacks and tricks of Satan.

2. We learn that Satan is a coward who can't stand to be resisted from this verse.
- D. We must draw closer to God and He will draw closer to us.
1. We must study and pray more.
 2. When that takes place God is closer to us, and able to give us the answer to our prayers that we are seeking.
 3. He can do so because we have submitted to His will, thus in prayer, we are seeking that His will be met and not ours.
- E. We draw closer to God by getting further and further from sin.
1. We must come to God with clean hands and pure hearts.
 2. Otherwise we remain in sin and have a double mind, the same thing James commanded avoiding in the first chapter, saying this person is unstable.
- F. Instead of reveling in our sins, we are to weep over them.
1. Sin should sadden us not make us laugh.
 2. We should be blushing over sin instead of enjoying it.
 3. It should make our hearts heavy instead of hardened.
- G. When we humble ourselves and learn to serve, then God can lift us up.
1. We ought to see the words of Jesus in these words.
 2. We can't be great till we are humble servants.
- H. The only way wars and fightings will cease is if we repent and submit to God.