



Faith in Real Life – James 4:1-10 Faith in War

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (PAGE 1)

TRADITIONAL MODEL

- James uses war language when talking about the conflicts taking place amongst the believers. In what ways can conflict be like war?

- Read James 4:1 and James 1:13-16. How does our internal warring and struggle with sin affect our warring with others?

- How does our internal warring and struggle with sin affect our relationship with God?

- In war, there is always collateral damage. What other relationships or areas of our lives are affected by our personal wars against sin or, on the other hand, our complacency to fight against sin?

- Read James 4:4. Why is it critical that we understand that James' usage of "the world" is meant to describe our decision to pursue selfish and sinful cravings, rather than simply culture or unbelievers?

- Read James 4:5-6. How do these verses reveal the remarkability of the gospel?

- Read James 4:7-10. Then read Matthew 6:7-15 and Matthew 5:3-11. How does coming to the grips with magnitude and gravity of our sin – to the point of personal grief, even – ultimately magnify our Savior, so much so that we are comforted, exalted, and filled with joy?

- How do these passages from the Sermon on the Mount further unlock James 4:7-10?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (PAGE 2)

- How can we wage war against our tendencies to forget that we've been rescued by Christ and transferred into his kingdom (i.e. Colossians 1:9-13)?
- How can we grow in our awareness and dependence on the Holy Spirit, God's presence in our lives?
- What are the advantages of spending time with the Lord – beginning before things of the day become?

CONTEMPLATIVE MODEL

What are you learning about God from this message?

What are you learning about yourself from the message?

What questions does this message bring up for you?

What has God been doing in your heart lately?

What things do you feel are getting in the way from what God wants to do in you?

What is the biggest thing causing you concern these days (something to pray about/ask prayer for)?



FAITH IN WAR NOTES

James 4:1-10

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ² You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet^a something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴ Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, "God^b yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? ⁶ But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 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 Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

– James 4:1-10

I. INTRO

A. "Faith in war"

1. Conflict can feel like war.
2. In James 4:1, the Greek words that we have translated as "conflicts" and "disputes" come for the words "war" and "fights/battles".

B. "Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from?"

– James 4:1a

1. "Do they not come from your cravings that are at within you?"

– James 4:1b

2. We wage war against others because of the effects of sin warring against and within us (e.g. James 1:12-15; Eph. 6:10-14; Rom. 7:14-25; 2 Peter 5:6-11)

3. In war – particularly ancient war – mountains are for perspective and advantage.

II. "FAITH ON A MOUNT"

A. The Letter of James and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)

1. If you read the letter of James carefully, you see that it reads like an extended commentary or parallel to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.



- a. The Sermon on the Mount contains the first five discourses (long teaching blocks) in the Gospel of Matthew.
- b. As a whole, the Gospel of Matthew was used as a discipleship manual for early Christians. It's believed to have been the most widely read and circulated gospel account to the early church, due to its long discourses that were interspersed into the narrative.

B. Mountains are for perspective.

1. Whereas mountains were used in war for military advantage, James assumes an understanding of the Sermon on the Mount, which gives us perspective for the sake of disarming us of our own tendencies and sinful inclinations.
2. The Sermon on the Mount reveals that in the kingdom of heaven, life is not as we expect it to be.

C. Without the Sermon on the Mount, James 4:1-10 is difficult to unlock!

"You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures."

- James 4:2-3

1. Compare to Matt. 5:21-22 for Jesus' hyperbolic usage of murder in association to hate.
 - a. See also Matt. 5:38-42 for Jesus' dealing with retaliation.
 - b. See also Matt. 5:43-47 for Jesus' words concerning enemies.
2. For asking and receiving, compare to Matt. 6:25-34; 7:7-11.
 - a. In Matthew 7:7-8, what Jesus is implying we are to ask for is the kingdom and his righteousness, as seen in Matthew 6:33, in addition to what Jesus models in his earlier prayer (Matt. 6:9-14).
 - b. In Luke's account of Jesus teaching on asking and receiving (Luke 11:1-13), note that it is ultimately about asking and receiving the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), not worldly possessions.

D. "Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, 'God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us'? *But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'*" – James 4:4-6



1. Compare to Matt. 5:27-30 for adultery being more than physical, but a matter of the eyes, mind, and heart.
2. Compare to Matt. 5:24 for having hostility towards God and placing ourselves in opposition to him because of an allegiance and devotion to money/pleasures and the pursuit thereof.

E. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

– James 4:7-8

1. Compare James 4:7-8 to the Lord's words on prayer and forgiveness in Matt. 5:7-15.
2. Understand James 4:9-10 in light of The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12/
3. James 4:7-10 is the gospel of the kingdom (cf. Matthew 4:17; 4:23; Colossians 1:9-13)

III. CONCLUSION (3 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER)

- A. Am I fighting the wrong war?
- B. Am I growing in my awareness and dependence on the Holy Spirit?
- C. Will I begin before things "become"?