

Storm Proof S2E2 — The War Within

James 4:1–6 ESV

Vs. 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. 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. **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.”

Key Word: Surrender

Big Idea: Peace begins when we surrender the desires that are at war within us.

1. Find the Fight Within: Vs. 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. You do not have, because you do not ask.

- James asks a question, “**What** causes quarrels and **What** among you?”
- Our outward conflicts often expose inward demands.
 - **Greek Word:** ἡδονή (*hēdonē*) “pleasure.” In verses 1 and 3, James uses its plural form for the self-serving pleasures driving conflict and shaping misguided prayers.

2. Examine What You’re Asking For: Vs. 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.

- You don’t have it because you don’t ask.
- Prayer can become an attempt to get God to serve our desires.

3. Surrender Your Divided Heart: 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. **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”?

- Friendship with the world means adopting values that compete with loyalty to God.

- The answer to the earlier question of what? **Vs. 6** But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Practical Takeaway: Add a time of surrender into your daily time with God. Let go of all the things you are holding on to.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. Read James 4:1–2. Why does James say our conflicts with others often begin within ourselves?
2. Read James 4:2–3. How can our personal desires influence the way we pray?
3. What is something you have wanted so badly that it began to affect your peace or relationships?
4. Read James 4:4–6. What does friendship with the world look like today, and how does humility help us surrender to God?
5. What is one desire, struggle, or situation you need to surrender to God this week?