



11/25/25

James 4:1-10

In Genesis 6:3, the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." He was saying, "I won't continue to contend or strive with these people who are so corrupt that they refuse to turn to Me. I'm going to give them 120 years. They will see My servant, Noah, build the ark. They will remember the prophecies of Enoch. For the next 120 years they will have a chance to turn to Me." I will see that no one did repent, and God brought judgment. But He never stops calling us to repentance. It is His desire to be in relationship with us, not to condemn us. I want to look more like Noah than the corrupt people who surrounded him. Sadly, even as a believer who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in me, I can get caught up in their way of thinking.

What causes a follower of Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in me, to look more like the corrupt people than like a believer who walks with God?

Vs. 1-2a ~ "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel."

This makes it very clear... I don't get to blame others for my anger or frustration. My own worst enemy is ME. The conflicts I get into with other people are because of my passions that wage war within me... my selfish desires. I am not responsible for other's selfish desires, but I am responsible for mine. Inasmuch as it depends on ME, I need to "be at peace with all men" (Romans 12:18).

When I am living for my selfish passions, I allow my desires to "murder" relationships, rather than pursue peace with others. When I'm fighting for MY rights and not getting what I want, I blame others and resent them.

I do what I do because...

I think what I think because...

*I want what I want because...
I worship what I worship.*

*When I'm living for SELF ~
I do... fight and hurt relationships, because...
I think... this person is standing in the way of my happiness, because...
I want what I want and I want it now, because...
I worship... comfort, safety, attention, pleasure, control... for SELF.*

Does the person I have conflict with truly stand in my way?

Vs. 2b-3 ~ "You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."

Who am I supposed to ask? Is it the person I'm conflicted with? No. The true source of my peace and contentment is not any human. It is the Lord. I do not have these things that I so desperately want because I'm not going to the source... God Himself.

But it gets worse... Sometimes I DO ask the Lord to give me what I want... but I'm asking with the wrong motives. To ask according to what pleases Him, my motives will be to glorify Him and bear fruit for Him (John 15:8). To ask according to what pleases me is to ask Him to help me SIN! It's to ask Him to give me His heavenly treasures so that I can fill my SELF even more. That completely goes against His holiness. It would be CRAZY for Him to say yes to me when what I'm asking for will cause me more unholiness and harm in the end.

Sometimes I think, "How is this thing I'm asking for about my selfish passions? It's a good thing!" But God sees a much bigger picture than I do and He has a much greater purpose. The question is, will I trust Him? Will I trust His power, His wisdom, His authority, His love? O Lord, when I can't see Your plan, please help me to still trust it! And please help me to keep an eternal perspective... not just looking at what would make my life easier today, but looking to my eternal home and hope... trusting that everything You allow me to walk through here on earth is preparing me for my future with You.

Vs. 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."

Whoa! My struggle with others is a direct offense to God. This is love of the world, where I'm going after "the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eyes, and pride of life" (1 John 2:16). This is against God. It makes me hostile to HIM!

People will say, "I'm not mad at God. I'm mad at that other person." But Jesus says, "When you've done it to the least of these, My brothers, you've done it to Me." Yikes! That is SOBERING.

Let me not miss this... When I'm fighting with others, I am not only loving the things of the world, I'm also making myself an enemy of God AND an adulterer!!! I am literally cheating on God. I am the bride of Christ... cheating on Him with a liar.

O Lord, I think I minimize my sin way too much. Please help me not to take Your forgiveness for granted. Let me not use my "freedom" as an excuse to justify evil.

Vs. 5-6 ~ "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'? But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'"

Does God just want to be mad at me for disobedience? No. He yearns for me to have a united heart with Him. He gave me my new spirit through Jesus. I am a new creation in Christ. He doesn't want me to choose adultery against Him and to be His enemy. Would anyone want that???

But as much as God yearns for me to be one with Him, more than anything He gives me, He gives me more grace. When is the only time in my life that I will not experience His grace? When I refuse it because of my pride. The only thing I bring to the relationship is my humility because of faith. His grace does the rest.

Vs. 7-10 ~ Humility starts this section, and humility ends this passage. And in between I find what humility looks like.

God gives grace to the humble...

- To those who submit to Him and resist the devil. Pride resists Him and submits to the devil, because the devil falsely promises that the passions of my flesh can be satisfied by indulgence in them. Pride is dumb. Pride is blind. Humility is not weak... it is wise and bold. Humility recognizes that bowing to the Lord is the best place to be. As soon as I do bow to the Lord, the devil runs the other direction because he is too afraid of God (though he's not afraid of me).*
- Humility draws near to God. Let me not confuse humility with shame. Shame is just the flip side of the pride coin. Pride says, "I am awesome. Shame says "I should be awesome." Both pride and humility avoid the Lord. Humility says, "Lord, You are awesome." Humility wisely draws near to God. When I draw near to God, He draws near to me... because He knows that if He draws near to me while I'm stuck in pride, I'll just push Him away.*
- Humility is repentant. It turns from sin rather than embracing it. It doesn't vacillate between obedience and rebellion but chooses to follow God wholeheartedly. It mourns over sin rather than minimizing it or justifying it.*

- *Humility bows to the Lord and doesn't fight to be lifted up... but is content to let the Lord be the one to lift me up. Humility knows that His exaltation for me is far better than anything that can be achieved by pride.*

Anger and pride always FEEL powerful in the moment. They're not. It takes far more strength to be humble before the Lord than it does to fight for SELF. O Lord, I see that You are the source for all that I need. Instead of embracing the passions of my flesh, please help me to embrace a zeal for You and Your glory. Instead of fighting and quarreling, please help me to pursue peace and unity. Instead of justifying my sin, please help me to grieve over grieving You... and turn from the sin. Please teach me a deeper humility.

I will end with this prayer of humility that I put together from a few quotes of Andrew Murray and a few words of my own... O Lord, please make Your great goodness known to me, and take from my heart, every kind and form and degree of pride, whether it be from spiritual warfare, or my own corrupt nature; and please awaken in me the deepest depth and truth of that humility, which can transform me by Your light and the Holy Spirit. I understand that it is impossible for me to do this in my own strength, my God; let there be an end of relying on my flesh and all its powers, an end of self, and let it be my glory to be helpless before You. In my own strength, change is impossible, but with You all things are possible, O God. May I worship You wholeheartedly and walk in the steps of Jesus. Amen.