



August 24, 2025
Series: Week 10
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(NS-1)

What Do You Want the Most? A Battle Rages

“What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can’t get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them.

Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it.” James 4:1-2

This group of believers was experiencing intense in-fighting due to their selfish desires going unmet.

- They’ve made an idol out of the object of their selfish desires. – “I can’t be happy without this.”

Paul, in Galatians 5:16-17, describes a very personal and intense battle raging inside of every Christian.

- Our sinful natures want us to do evil while the indwelling Holy Spirit wants us to honor God.
- The nature we feed is the one that will dominate our life. This calls for intentional living. (NS-2)

“You adulterers! Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God?...

If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.” James 4:4

They decided God wasn’t enough so they committed spiritual infidelity and treated God like an enemy.

Why would we ever stop treating God like He’s our friend? (1.) Past hurts leave us feeling unlovely – God could never love me **(2.)** satan keeps reminding us of our past failures – I’ve been rejected. **(3.)** Busy lives and wrong priorities – We slowly drift from the essentials that grow our connection with God. (NS-3)

Who In the World Do You Think You Are?

“God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy.

So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?” James 4:12

Do you really think you’re the judge of all mankind? (James 4:11-12)

- To “criticize and judge” is breaking the law and placing ourselves above the lawmaker. Romans 13:8
- We must focus on our obedience to the law more than on those we think aren’t keeping it. Matthew 7:1-5
- God is the giver of the law – Only He has the right to Judge – Only God has “the power to save and destroy.”

Why do we criticize and judge? **(1.)** Strike back at someone who has hurt us. **(2.)** Feelings of inadequacy.

Tearing you down builds me up. **(3.)** Our need to belong – “I know juicy facts you don’t know.” (NS-4)

- Being critical and judging can: Ruin reputations – Split churches – Break marriages – Wound hearts.

Do you really think you have control of your days on this earth? (James 4:13-17)

- Stop acting like you’re in control of charting your course and determining your success. 4:13
- Life is a vapor and you don’t even know if you’ll still be here tomorrow. This isn’t the main event. 4:14
- Let God write your story. Choose what He wants over all of your own plans and desires. 4:15-16
- You’re taking a huge risk when you know the right thing to do and choose not to do it. 4:17

Diving Into God’s Grace

“And He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’” James 4:6

No matter how much we’ve messed up, God continues to pursue us with wave after wave of His grace.

“For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.” John 1:16

Pride keeps us on the beach where we miss out on God’s wave after wave of restoring grace.

“So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7

“humble” - Interprets a Greek military term that means to submit to the authority over you. (NS-5)

- Stop letting your selfish desires control you - Stop living like satan and his world are your friend.

“Resist the devil and he will flee from you” –

- Lit. - “Take a stand against him” – Get his foot out of the door – satan is a defeated foe.
- A friend of God doesn’t get cozy with the very things Jesus suffered on the cross for.
- Think full armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10-18) A complacent walk will get you gobbled up.
- Claim the victory found in Jesus – His shed blood – His resurrection from the dead. (NS-6)

“Come close to God, and God will come close to you...” 4:8 (NS-7)

- Think Prodigal Son - Owned his sin - Came humbly to his father - His father ran to him. Luke 15:11-24

“Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief...” 4:9

- As our intimacy with God grows, so will the grief we feel when we realize we’re hurting Him.

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor” 4:10

- God doesn’t want us to stay in the place of sorrowful repentance (that’s satan’s game).
- Humbly come close to God, and as you experience His restoration, your heart will fill with gratitude.

Have you truly decided what it is you want the most?

Tell Jesus -> I want You more than anything or anyone else! I really do; I need You! I’ve been so wrong and don’t want to live a divided life any longer. I’m running full speed to You!

Further Study –

1. Watch any sermon series and work through our helpful sermon guides by going to www.lebefree.org
2. Read Galatians 5:16-26 to learn more about the battle raging inside of every Christian. In what ways have you been feeding your sinful nature? In what ways have you been feeding your new nature? Ask God to give you the power to take the necessary steps to claim the victory found only in Jesus.
3. Have any of these factors caused you to live as though God isn’t your friend? Share your story.
4. Be still before God and ask Him to reveal people you’ve hurt by being critical or by judging them. Ask Him to help you take the hard steps of owning your sin and making things right.
5. Further Study: Humility - Isaiah 66:2; Matthew 5:3-5; 23:12; Luke 18:9-14
6. Read 1 Corinthians 15:55-58; Ephesians 1:3-8; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 John 3:7-10. Claim the victory. Turn your back on the enemy and run as fast as you can to the victory found only in Jesus.
7. Further Study: Longing to be close to God - Psalm 27:7-8; 63:1-8; 84:1-4; 143:6; Matthew 22:34-40

Key Passages – (NLT)

James 4:1-17

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

²You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can’t get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. ³And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. ⁴You adulterers! Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. ⁵Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit He has placed within us should be faithful to Him. ⁶And He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. ⁹Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor. ¹¹Don’t speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God’s law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ¹²God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor? ¹³Look here, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.” ¹⁴How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. ¹⁵What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

Jesus, I want You more than anything or anyone else!