

Week 7 – James 4:1-12 The Cause of Quarrels

1. The Cause of Quarrels (4:1-5)

- In verses 1–3 James gives us a profound analysis of human conflict. People have wondered for centuries what causes conflict, and they have given multiple answers to the question: differing philosophies, inaccurate assumptions, differing expectations, differences in culture, differing conflict resolution strategies. James, however, cuts right to the root. He gives an answer that is so self-evidently true that it now seems inescapably obvious to us, something that, once said, can never be denied. What is James’s answer? “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?”
- In verse 2, is James accusing members of the church of actually, physically killing each other? (Hint: read Matthew 5:21–22 before you answer.)
- Ponder verse 3. Is every desire a good desire? How do you tell the difference between a good desire and a bad one?
- In verses 4–5 James makes the point that you cannot be driven by ungodly desires and expect to be in friendship with God. Where else in the Bible is this truth taught?

2. The Nature of Repentance (4:6-10)

- In verse 6, what does James say is the antidote to the prideful desires that cause quarrels?
- In verses 7–10 James exhorts believers to do seven things in order to counteract pride in their lives. List those seven exhortations, and explain what James means by each of them.

3. Who are You to Judge? (4:11-12)

- In verses 11–12 James returns to the main theme of these last few verses—the way some in the Christian community were speaking evil of one another out of jealousy and a selfish ambition for status in the church. “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.” But read the rest of verse 11. What is the reason James gives for not speaking evil against each other?
- To what specific commandment does James point in 2:8 as summing up or encapsulating the heart of King Jesus’ royal law? How is it a violation of that commandment to speak evil against a brother?