

What Causes Quarrels Among Christians?

Introduction and Review

- ❑ In James 3, we looked at the use of the tongue and the influence of ungodly and godly wisdom.
- ❑ The result of ungodly wisdom is disorder & disunity, but the result of godly wisdom is righteous & peace.
- ❑ These believers are not experiencing this peace as they suffer physically & spiritually simply because they are believers.
- ❑ This suffering resulted in serious internal conflict within the church that had to be addressed.

I. Quarrels and Fights (v. 1-5)

A. Definitions (v. 1-2)

“quarrels” (πόλεμος) means general warfare, conflict or hostility – conflict on a large scale. “fights” (μάχη) means individual battles & strife. “murder” (φονεύω) means premeditated killing. As in ch. 3, James is still concerned about misuse of the tongue & actions among believers.

B. Causes (v. 1-2)

Passions means sinful desires for self-indulgent pleasures (v. 1). These sinful desires involve **covetousness** – intense desire for something that belongs to someone else (v. 2). **Pride & selfishness** always results in harm/damage (Pr. 16:18).

C. Consequences (2-5)

There was conflict & strife between individuals, groups & the entire church (v. 2). There were also premeditated plans to harm church members – **attack character, reputation, motives, financially, etc.** Even their prayers were selfish & perverted (v. 3). **Wrong motives make our prayer ineffective.** They were yielding to the world’s temptation for personal pleasures (v. 4-5; Jas. 1:13-15; 1Jn. 2:15-16). **No one can love, serve or befriend God & the world...**

APPL: Pride, arrogance & selfishness in the heart of believers leads to disunity, disorder & outward conflict. This is a serious problem because the church becomes ineffective within & without. It damages the reputation of Christ & the church (Jn. 13:35).

II. Peace and Unity (v. 6-10)

Christ always has a remedy for this sin that only comes to damage His people, His church & His name.

A. Grace is available (v. 6a)

Grace in this context has a dual meaning. Grace means that God can forgive anyone that has sinned in all the ways just mentioned that leads to quarrels. Also grace means the supernatural ability to be victorious in some of the worst temptations in this world (1Co. 15:10; 2Co. 12:9). Grace comes from God; He gives it to whomever He wants.

B. Humility is essential (v. 6b-10)

*God does not give this grace for victory over sin to proud & arrogant believers. Receiving this grace for victory involves several steps: 1) **Submit to God** – put yourselves completely under God’s lordship [obedience w/o reservation]; 2) **Resist the devil** – actively oppose the devil’s attempts for your obedience; 3) **Draw near to God** – live in close fellowship with God thru repentance & holiness (v. 8-9) {**be serious about sin – v. 9**}; and 4) **Humble yourselves before God** – acknowledge your desperate need for divine help & trust God for public vindication (Lk. 18:9-14).*

APPL: Quarrels & fights are not to be accepted as a normal way of life in the church. Again we must remember that we represent Christ in this world – “my church”, “my sheep”, “the bride”, “branches”, “disciples”, “Christians”, “the body of Christ”, “ambassadors for Christ”, “soldiers”, etc. In each analogy describing the church, conflict & strife is a dishonor & disgrace to the Shepherd, Husband, Teacher, Head, Captain, etc. Therefore we must humble ourselves to love one another & live in unity for the glory of Christ & our maturity (Eph. 4:1-6, 13-16).

CONCLUSION

My beloved brothers & sisters James has reminded us that trials in life can reveal some ugly sins in us. Trials often reveal pride & covetousness in us when other church members are prosperous and when we are not; happy & we are not; healthy & we are not; moving forward & we are not. **Any careless Christian** could find himself or herself saying hurtful & combative things to another Christian; doing hurtful & harmful things; and even praying selfish/perverted prayers when you are in a trial IF you yield to evil temptations. Therefore we must all guard our hearts; ask God to give us clean hearts & pure motives; submit ourselves to **God's will for our lives regardless of the consequences**; and trust God to deliver & vindicate us either in this life or in eternity. Our true riches & blessing are in Jesus, not in a house, car, job, etc.; He is our King, Joy, Refuge, Strength, Healer, Bread, Light, Firm Foundation, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace... We must grow in our love for Jesus & for each other – that is true joy, peace & unity!

If you are not a Christian, I want to remind you that Jesus is also the only savior for sinners. Jesus has given His life to save you from the penalty of your sins. Will you trust Him today for salvation; will you believe...?

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[Prepared by Willie D. Woodmore](#)