

m MASTERCLASS | JAMES

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 16

READ

JAMES 4:1-3

FOCUS

¹WHAT CAUSES FIGHTS AND QUARRELS AMONG YOU? DON'T THEY COME FROM YOUR DESIRES THAT BATTLE WITHIN YOU? ²YOU DESIRE BUT DO NOT HAVE, SO YOU KILL. YOU COVET BUT YOU CANNOT GET WHAT YOU WANT, SO YOU QUARREL AND FIGHT. YOU DO NOT HAVE BECAUSE YOU DO NOT ASK GOD. ³WHEN YOU ASK, YOU DO NOT RECEIVE, BECAUSE YOU ASK WITH WRONG MOTIVES, THAT YOU MAY SPEND WHAT YOU GET ON YOUR PLEASURES.

REFLECTION from PASTOR MATT CIANFRANI

Growing up, my friend's grandma would always drink hot tea that she had made the old fashioned way, not from a Keurig, but by heating water on the stove in a tea kettle. I remember being a very little kid and the teapot was like magic to me. How could water whistle? Obviously, I was an easily entertained kid, but the whistle of a tea kettle really can be a fascinating analogy...one that has often been compared to anger. It's easy to see why; anger just like water, gets hot, starts to steam, and then finally when it boils, it comes out as a bunch of noise--the "whistle" is us losing our temper. Here is the reality: when we lash out in anger, it is really just a reflection of what is going on in our hearts. Anger can actually be an indicator for us; it provides a really clear way for us to see the true condition of our hearts.

Let me provide you with an illustration. Imagine that you are walking around with a cup that is full to the brim and you bump into something. What is going to happen? Whatever is in the cup will spill out as you bump into things. Our hearts work in a very similar way. If we are constantly lashing out in anger when life gets a little bumpy it is probably because our hearts are full of bitterness. This is exactly what James is saying, but he doesn't stop there...he goes one step further.

James says that it is our unchecked desires that lead us to fights and quarrels. James isn't necessarily talking about a fistfight, he is talking about the unseen nonphysical fights that we get into with others. Think about the internal repugnance that pops up in our minds and hearts when we want what others have. When we covet what others have or lust over worldly things, possessions, a physique, or lifestyle, this causes us to become discontent with what we have--we become fighters (maybe not physically but we wage war in our minds). Simply put, we fight because within our hearts are the wrong desires. This is why James says when you ask God for something you do not receive it because you ask badly or wrongly. It would be like a child asking his parents for money but when they give it to him, he spends it destructively and ignorantly. How much longer do you think they would continue to give their child such money? Not long.

My challenge for you today, is to spend a few minutes with the Lord and ask for nothing other than His will to be done in your life. There could be no purer prayer than, "Not my will but Yours."

QUESTIONS

- WHAT DESIRES DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE THAT MAY BE CAUSING "STRIFE" WITHIN YOU (CAUSING YOU TO BE DISCONTENT, ENVIOUS, OR JEALOUS)?
- SPEND A FEW MOMENTS IN PRAYER, ASKING GOD TO REPLACE YOUR OWN WILL FOR SELFISH THINGS WITH HIS WILL FOR KINGDOM THINGS AND PURPOSES.