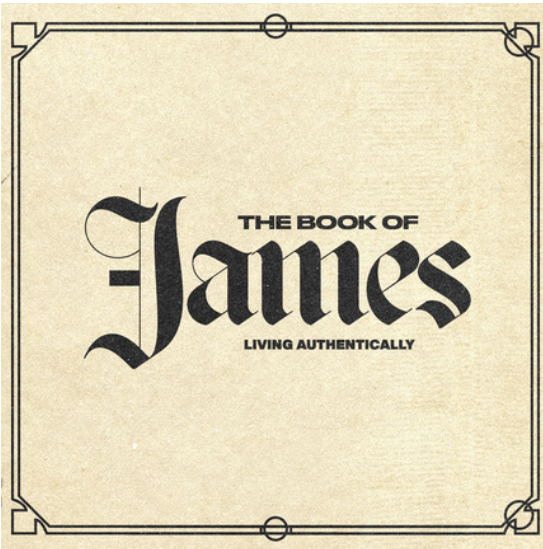


# SERMON STUDY GUIDE



05.12.24 // Week 5 // “Navigating Conflict”



The world's landscape rapidly changed after the resurrection of Jesus. As God's work of redeeming people continued, communities were formed. But the truth is we are still messy even while we are redeemed. James writes with a bluntness and candor that is unique in the New Testament. But amidst the direct, proverbial nature, he speaks truths that still land with us 2,000 years later. Here we learn how to put feet to our faith and live lives congruent with our beliefs!

## ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- In your opinion, what are the most common causes of conflict in relationships or teams?
- What is one of the best pieces of advice you've come across for resolving conflict?

# GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

## Let's read James 4:1-12

*1 What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? 2 You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God. 5 Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely? 6 But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says:*

### **God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble**

*7 Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. 11 Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters. Anyone who defames or judges a fellow believer defames and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

### **Point 1 – When in conflict, ask WHAT is the source, not WHO is the source**

Conflict is a universal human experience. We are either in one, just out of one, or about to run into one. Whether it's disagreements between your spouse, neighbors, or boss, learning how to manage conflict peacefully is one of the most important skills to learn as a follower of Jesus. Good news! The Book of James offers us some very helpful tips on how to manage conflict in healthy ways.

In James 4:1, James asks the question: What is the source of relational conflicts anyway? What's going on inside us that pushes us into conflict with another? James argues that conflicts arise from "passions" inside of us. The word "passion" refers to the warring desires in our heart for the things of God or the "pleasures" of the world. James is instructing us that conflict occurs when something rises up from within us. Something inside of us gets poked, and it needs to find an outlet. Sometimes, our own past experiences, family of origin wounds, or personal wiring contribute to the conflict at hand.

This is why it's so vital to identify the source of the conflict within us and invite God into the desires that battle within us. This will keep us from transferring the battles within us to someone else and place our frustrations on another person.

Here are a few helpful reflective questions to consider in moments of conflict:

- Do I own my piece of the conflict?
- Do I need to be right all the time?
- Do I need to have the last say?
- Do I need to get my way?
- Do I seek to understand?
- What is God trying to show me at this moment?

If you would like to learn more about how to resolve conflict, please check out Amy Elliott's Midweek Moment by scanning the QR code below:



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What's the most challenging conflict you've ever faced? How did you handle it?
  
- Can you share a time when you turned a conflict into an opportunity for growth or understanding?
  
- What is the true source of your most frequent conflict? Ask God for wisdom in how to make peace in this area.

## Point 2 – Identify where God’s values conflict with the world.

Finding the source of the conflict is important, but James doesn’t let us stop there. Before we can resolve the conflict, we need to align ourselves with God’s values. If we try to live godly lives and glorify God, we will handle conflict differently. We will choose to follow God’s path, which may not always be the easier path, but it will always be the better path.

In James 4:7-8 we’re shown how to resolve conflict in God’s way.

Submit to God.

- While the proud “highlight” themselves, the humble “submit to God.” This phrase means that they allow themselves to be “ordered below” God in a sense of authority. Like a subject to a king, the humble person yields to God with their very life.

Resist the Devil

- To “resist” is more than a simple refusal; it is an absolute opposition. Those who are humble draw a line in the sand to stand against the Devil and anything he tries to do to lure them in. While easier said than done, the point is the mindset and attitude behind it. The Devil “will flee” from those who oppose him.

Draw near to God.

- If I am distant from God, it is because I have moved, not God. The proud walk away from God; the humble walk with God. Proximity to God is the biggest indication of the difference between the proud and the humble. God’s promise is that when we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. Nearness to God is where peace comes from, regardless of our circumstances.

Become single-minded (as opposed to “double-minded”).

- We cannot be spiritually double-minded, devoted to God one moment and then proud and opposing Him the next. That is not a spiritually healthy way to live. We must live with a single-minded focus and devotion to God.

Why should we choose this way to handle arguments, fights, and conflict? Romans 14:19 says, “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.” This is so that God can be glorified through us, that we can learn to peacefully navigate conflicts as they arise, and that we can lead by example so that others can see Jesus in us.

