

**Having Calmness Rather Than Conflict In My Relationships**  
**Next Steps Devotional Guide**  
**Sermon Series: May 5, 2024**  
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This devotional guide is designed to be used either in a small group setting or as an individual devotional guide throughout the week. If you are using this as a personal devotional guide, divide the points below up so as to be able to work on a few each day to get you through the whole week.

1. When it comes to conflicts in your family, what would you say is the main cause of them and why?
2. Read James 4:1 in your sermon outline. What does this say to you and why?
3. The word translated as “quarrels” is the Greek New Testament word [πόλεμος, polemos], where we get our English word polemic. This word is used to refer to a struggle or conflict between power groups. It was used to refer to a battle with weapons. It referred to a long, prolonged and serious disputing or combat is often translated as “war.” Have you ever seen power groups in a church go to war with each other? What was the results and your reaction?
4. The word translated as “fights” is the Greek New Testament word [μάχη, mache], which refers to a specific struggle without weapons. It refers to personal attacks through put downs and insults. Instead of being peacemakers as we saw last week, this church is at war with different groups in it. How does this affect the influence of the Gospel in a church’s community?
5. Read James 4:2 in your sermon outline. The context for James 4:2 is Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:21-22. Read this passage also in your sermon outline.
  - a. The Greek New Testament word translated as “angry” is [ὀργιζόμενος, orgizomenos]. It is the word from which we get our English word “orgy.” This word refers to the long-lived anger; it is the anger of the person who nurses their wrath to keep it warm; it is the anger over which a person broods, and which they will not allow to die. Jesus forbids this kind of anger because it will not forget, it refuses to be pacified, and it eventually which seeks revenge. To Jesus this type of anger is murder. If you had to explain to someone why Jesus says this anger is actually murder, what would you say and why? When have you either witnessed this kind of anger or personally expressed it? What happened?
  - b. The word translated as [ῥακά, raka], in some translations is translated as insults. “Raca” is an almost untranslatable Aramaic word. The closest translation would be “blockhead” or “idiot.” It is the attitude that one is better than another. It is that tone of voice that has that subtle put-down and blatant snobbishness.
  - c. Read the explanation for Greek New Testament word translated as “raka.” Why is name calling another considered murder by Jesus?
  - d. In Matthew 5:22a, Jesus used the word “Raca.” Raca” describes a tone or attitude of voice more than anything else. It describes the tone and sin of contempt. This word has no English equivalent. In Jesus’ day, New Testament scholars say it was used a a term of malicious abuse, derision, and slander. Therefore, many translations translate “Race” as “brainless, worthless, empty headed, blockhead and such. Have you ever been guilty of this kind of tone of contempt towards anyone. What were the results?
  - e. Jesus attacks such self-confidence by charging that no one is truly innocent of murder, because the first step in murder is anger. Jesus, in His statement, is shattering our sense of prideful self-righteousness. Why do you think in conflict we can have such an attitude of prideful self-righteousness?
  - f. Read Psalms 51:6 and 1 Samuel 16:7 in your sermon outline. How do these passages relate to Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:21-22?
  - g. Jesus says that Murder originates in the heart, not in the hands. It starts with evil thoughts, regardless of whether or not those thoughts are brought to consummation in action.” Why is this true?
  - h. Read Matthew 5:22c again in your sermon outline. The Greek New Testament word translated as “fool” is [μωρός, moros]. This is where we get our English word “moron.” In Jesus’ day, to call a person a “Moron,” was to accuse them of being both stupid and godless. God considers this not only an insult against the person, but against Him personally because that person is created in His image. Does this change how you will talk to people when you are unjustly angry with them? Why or why not?
  - i. Read 1 John 3:15 in your sermon outline. This says we all are guilty of murder. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
  - j. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:28 in your sermon outline. Jesus connected lust with adultery just like He connected anger to murder. Why do you think people do not see this connection?
  - k. When there is conflict between different groups in a church, when handled wisely and biblically, it can lead that church to more growth. When they are not handled wisely and biblically it can lead that church to its grave. Read James 1:20 in your sermon outline. What does this tell you and why?

- l. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 18:6 in your sermon outline. "Little ones" can refer to children and it can refer to those young in the faith or new to the faith or not mature in the faith. Does this change how you will express your anger in the future? Why?
  - m. Read James 4:1 again in your sermon outline. The Greek New Testament word James uses here for "evil desires" is [ἡδονή;, hedone]. This is where we get our English word hedonistic, hedonism. This is the the philosophy that pleasure is the main goal of life. In everyday Greek, it literally meant "enjoyments." Meaning — we can take good things God has given us and use them in selfish and ungodly ways? How have you ever done that?
  - n. Read 2 Timothy 3:2-4 in your sermon outline. The church James is writing about is not in fights and quarrels over biblical doctrine or heresy or paganism encroaching into the church. They are fighting over each other and with each other over what each one wants. If you have ever witnessed this, what happened and did they ever get to what God wanted?
6. See the word translated as "war" in James 4:1? It is the Greek New Testament military word [στρατεύω, strateuo]. Pastor Kelly gave you 9 strategies people in the church use to attack each other. Read through those. Which have you been guilty of and what would you do now instead and why?
  7. James gives 3 main reasons for internal conflicts in the church. First, there were uncontrolled desires to have possessions. Read James 4:2a again in your sermon outline. The Greek New Testament word translated as "desire" is [ἐπιθυμέω, epithumeo] and it means "to lust." Meaning we can start "loving" things more than people. We can love traditions and style of worship more than people. And when things become more important than relationships, God says that is not love. That is lust. Why?
  8. James gives 3 main reasons for internal conflicts in the church. The second reason is due to the uncontrolled desires to feel pleasures. Read James 4:3b and 1 Timothy 6:17 in your sermon outline. Meaning — conflicts occur in the church when we take the good things God gives us and all we want is to get pleasure from them for ourselves rather than using them to bring praise to God. Anything good that is thwart, causes resentment which builds up and the result is conflict. When have you seen this happen in your own life or in a church? What were the results?
  9. James gives 3 main reasons for internal conflicts in the church. The third reason is due to uncontrolled desires to be powerful and prideful. There are people in the church who are about having power so they can control, manipulate and even dictate how things go even if relationships are severed. Read James 4:2-3 in your sermon outline. Why do you think some people in the church would push to have regulator power rather than relationships with people?
  10. Read both translations of Proverbs 13:10 in your sermon outline. The next time you're in an argument, stop and ask: "Is it worth it?" Is this something you would consider the next time?
  11. James gives us two reasons we do not get our desires fulfilled. First, we don't pray to God; instead we prey on each other. Read James 4:2-3 again in your sermon outline. Instead of going to God to meet our needs, we go to others. When you have a need, is your first reaction to go to God or someone else? Why?
  12. The second reason James says we do not get our needs met is because when we pray, we pray with the wrong motives. Read Philippians 4:19 in your sermon outline. What would be the right motive? Do agree with this: The lack of prayer in conflict itself is an evidence of pride. Why or why not?
  13. Read James 4:6 in your sermon outline. The Greek New Testament word James uses for "oppose" is [ἀντιτάσσω, antitasso] is a military term that refers to an army ready for battle. The Greek New Testament word that James uses for "proud" is [ὑπερήφανος, huperefanos]. This word conveys the idea is that of disdainfully and arrogantly supposing oneself to be above others. The term is rendered "arrogant" in Romans 1:30 and 2 Timothy 3:2, and in both places is directly associated with boasting. This kind of pride exudes self-sufficiency, cherishes its own independence from God and does not recognize or acknowledge its own sin. Why can a pride like that not receive help from God?
  14. Read Proverbs 6:16-19 in your sermon outline? God ranks the proud with murderers. Why?
  15. Read Psalms 16:5 in your sermon outline. How does knowing you are an abomination to God when you are proud affect you?
  16. Read Proverbs 16:8 (both translations) in your sermon outline. When have you see this happen either in your own life or someone else's life?
  17. James says, "God gives grace to the humble" in two ways. First, godly humility uses the Word of God to defeat the devil's schemes. Read 1 John 2:14 in your sermon outline. How would knowing more of God's Word help you defeat the devil's schemes and in which areas are you most vulnerable?
  18. James says, "God gives grace to the humble" in two ways. Second, godly humility gives us the greatest privilege of all — access to God. Read Hebrews 4:16 and Hebrews 4:14 in your sermon outline. What do these two verses say to you about being able to have access to God and Jesus Christ being your High Priest?