Connect to God in Prayer October 24, 2021

*James 4:1-6 Series: The Unstuck Life: Believe. Connect. Share.*

We have had instruction until we are hardened; it is now time for us to pray. – Charles Finney

Intro: Ötzi the Iceman

1. I keep arguing because of my selfishness
2. When fights break out in the church

v. 1 *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?*

1. Conflict with others starts with conflict within

v. 1 *your passions are at war within you*

1. We have conflict with others when we don’t get what we want

v. 2 *You desire and do not have, so you murder.*

v. 2 *You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*

Matthew 5:22 *I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment*

* What stood out to you in your Unstuck Life lessons this week?
* James argues that conflicts happen because we don’t get what we want. How do Christians often justify their selfishness?
* What should someone whose “passions are at war within” do?
* Is your arguing always a result of your “passions”? Could it sometimes just be that the other person is wrong or difficult?
1. I keep arguing because of my prayerlessness
2. We fight with people to get what only God can give

v. 2 *You do not have, because you do not ask.*

1. Prayer helps discern between God’s will and our own

v. 3 *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*

1 John 5:14 *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.*

1 John 3:21-22 *Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.*

Luke 22:42 *Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*

* In v. 2, James isn’t saying that they’re not asking anyone but that they’re not asking God. Why would he introduce prayer into a discussion of church conflict?
* What’s an example of something that someone might stop arguing about if they decided to pray about it instead?
* How do I know if I’m praying “wrongly”? How do I know if I’m praying for the Lord’s will or just my own will?
1. I keep arguing because of my worldliness
2. Prayer demonstrates where our true trust is

v. 4 *You adulterous people!*

v. 4 *Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*

v. 4 *whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*

Isaiah 54:5 *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.*

1. Aligning our values with the world is a rejection of God

v. 5 *He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us …*

1 John 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

1 John 2:17 *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

Romans 12:2 *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind …*

1. God’s grace can overcome our selfishness, prayerlessness, and worldliness

v. 6 *But he gives more grace.*

v. 6 *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

*Psalm 138:6 For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.*

* How can you know if you’ve become “a friend of the world”?
* Should God stop being so jealous? Why/why not?
* What does it mean in v. 6 when it says, “But he gives more grace”? More grace for what?
* Where do you most need help to grow in prayer?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Ephesians 5:15-21.

Notes