How Do We Stop Arguing? July 30, 2023

*James 4:1-12 Series: Show Me It’s Real*

Don't say, “That person bothers me.”
Think: “That person sanctifies me.”
—Josemaria Escriva

Intro: A young rabbi looking for answers

1. Entrust your needs to the One who truly loves you
2. Don’t look to people for what only God can give you

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

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

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

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

1. Don’t look to God for what the world has promised you

v. 1 *Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*

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

1. Don’t give the world the love that God deserves

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

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

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

Exodus 34:14 *the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*

* How do our conflicts spring from unhinged desires?
* How is prayer, in one sense, the answer to our conflicts?
* How are unbridled desires a symptom of spiritual adultery?
1. Humble yourself before the God who keeps giving
2. God is generous with the humble

v. 6 *But he gives more grace.*

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

v. 10 *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

1. You humble yourself by submitting to God instead of the world

v. 7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God.*

v. 7 *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

1 John 4:4 *you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world*

1. You humble yourself by drawing near to God instead of the world

v. 8 *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.*

v. 8 *Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

1. You humble yourself by grieving the sins that grieve God

v. 9 *Be wretched and mourn and weep.*

v. 9 *Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*

* Why is humility so important to God? Why does He give grace to the humble and not the proud?
* What does submitting to God mean when you’re arguing with someone?
* What does it look like for a Christian to “be wretched and mourn” over their sins?
1. Let God do the judging and you show the grace
2. You don’t get to condemn people

v. 11 *Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.*

v. 12 *But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

Ephesians 4:31 *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

1. When you speak against people, you’re speaking against God’s Word

v. 11 *The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law.*

v. 11 *But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.*

1. Judgment belongs to One who offers salvation

v. 12 *There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.*

Isaiah 33:22 *For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.*

Psalm 96:13 *the LORD … he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

* How does speaking against another Christian reflect on the Bible? I.e., How does it “judge the law”?
* How does a confidence that God will judge the world help calm us when we might want to argue?
* What do you most want to take away from this study when you’re next drawn into a conflict?

Study ahead: In three weeks, we’ll study James 4:13-5:6

Notes