

Scripture: James 4

Singing: 181:1, 3, 5, 7 – 176:1-4 – 170:1 – 147:1-2 – 342:1-4

A. Review: *What is/are the purposes of God's holy law?*

1. For unfallen men: *the revelation of God's love and direction how to love*

2. For fallen men: *the mirror to show us our sins in face of Jesus Christ*

3. For saints of God: *the revelation of God's love and direction how to love*

B. The 2nd Table of the Law: *God's boundaries on how to preserve relationships with our fellow creatures*

1. The universal problem in our relationships with others is *conflict*

2. God's Word devotes much time to dealing with conflicts

a. passages that deal with avoiding or resolving conflict

b. James 4 digs deeply into the source of human conflict

HUMAN CONFLICT (1)

I. The origin of conflict II. The remedy of conflict

I. THE ORIGIN OF CONFLICT:

A. James 4:1: *origin of all human conflict is what **rules** your heart!*

B. James answer on where conflicts come from is surprising: vs 1

1. His direction is contrary to our thinking

2. His analysis of conflict is because we *are an overflowing cup* instead of an empty cup of needs

C. James digs deeper into the origin of conflict vs. 2:

1. How does conflict progress?

a. it starts with our lusts (desires) which turn into demands

b. these demands are due to being blinded which distorts reality

- c. from 'the throne of demands' we climb the 'throne of God' (vs. 11-12)
 - 2. Observe the strong language: *battle – fight – kill - judge – condemn*
 - a. we adopt nasty strategies to get to our opponent

 - b. if not resolved, conflicts turn into trench-warfare
 - 3. Spiritual effect is disastrous: ruins our personal prayer life (vs. 3)
- D. James digs even deeper in vs. 4: good desires can become adulterous!
- 1. The 'lusts' (desires) in vs. 1 can be good or evil

 - 2. Yet 'good desires' can turn into evil ones when we desire them too much

 - 3. According to James 4:4: this *is committing adultery with the world*
 - a. God's diagnosis of conflict is *a devastating analysis of ourselves*

 - b. if our desires become as gods, they also become our lawgivers
- Ponder: How do we avoid conflicts? Avoid adulterous idolatry with our hearts?