

What's the Problem?

Scripture Reading — James 3:13-4:3

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

—James 4:1 —

We all have experienced it— worn out at the end of the day, seeking some calm and rest at home. But then shalom in the home doesn't happen. The kids may be yelling at each other, or no comfort food is available, or you find that you have to deal with a clogged toilet.

“Can't I have a little peace around here?” you mutter in frustration. You cannot find the peace you want because of unfulfilled desires in your heart. In fact, most conflict comes from unmet wants in your innermost being, a lack of satisfaction with what you have.

Some desires—such as greed, revenge, and lust—are obviously wrong. Other desires are good—such as a loving spouse, obedient children, loyal friends, and a good-paying job. But even the good desires can become sources of conflict when they take control of our thinking, deciding, and feeling. Watch out when “I desire” becomes “I need” or “I deserve” and then “I demand”—and then “I will attack anyone who gets in my way.”

We must ask ourselves two questions: Is my desire for God's presence, love, and power greater than anything else? And are my wants the same as what God wants for my life? Paul testified, “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation... . I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12-13).

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for selfish desires that resulted in fights with others. Empty my heart of demands and show me how to find peace in all you want me to do. Amen.

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