

Why Does My Family Argue? I and how do we stop

I. Why do we argue?

- James 4:1
- Why do your kids argue? Why do you and your spouse argue? You argue because *you want to argue*. Literally — it pleases you to argue.
- Most people say they don't like conflict. They would say that arguing is not pleasurable in the slightest. James isn't saying that the *process* of yelling and hitting and throwing things is pleasurable . . . though I believe more of us than want to admit it actually do experience a rush from arguing — at least in the moment. He's saying that it's *worth it* to argue because we're fighting for something extremely valuable.

II. Why do we *want* to argue?

- James 4:2-3
- We argue because we don't have what we desire, but we don't have what we desire for two main reasons:
 - *We simply didn't ask.*
 - *We ask for something that's sinful.*
- James warns us that even though we shouldn't expect sinful desires to be fulfilled, we still use that as a justification for our anger and quarreling.

III. Why do we believe we deserve something so badly that we're willing to argue and fight and murder to get it?

- James 4:4-5; Numbers 23:19
- All throughout the Bible, God uses the metaphor of infidelity in marriage to illustrate what happens when we sin against God. Choosing my own desires above God is spiritual adultery.
- Not only is my arguing rooted in my cheating on God, but the text reveals that this infidelity makes me a friend of the world and an enemy of God.
- Your kids argue because they've cheated on God, placed their own desires on His throne, and ordained themselves Chief Thunderbolt Hurler when the puny masses of your family don't fall in line. The consequence of their failed coup is that they have made themselves the enemy of God, and — if they're born again believers — they've earned an additional helping of God's righteous jealousy.
- Due to some unfortunate translation work, the following verse has caused confusion. Allow me to clarify with a slightly better rendering: "*Do you think the Scripture speaks in vain? The Spirit which He has made to dwell in us lusts with envy.*" The Scripture hasn't wasted Its breath. Numbers 23:19 tells us in no uncertain terms, "*God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?*"
- *God has spoken.* He jealously desires the fidelity of His children. The Bible does not speak in vain, and the very Holy Spirit who indwells all believers is vexed that He has to endure such a pathetic attempt to unseat God.
- So, here we have a bunch of tiny people arguing and fighting and murdering each other because they've decided that they should get *their way*. All the while, the God of the universe watches — grieved, cheated upon, and jealous for the love and loyalty and worship due Him.

IV. Is there any hope for the situation?

- James 4:6, ***“But He gives a greater grace.”***
- If a colony of termites were ticked off at each other because they each wanted the best parts of my house for themselves. I’d laugh them to scorn as I exterminated them. But God doesn’t wipe us out in our self-indulgent violence.
- He graciously and mercifully sacrifices Himself to redeem us and gives us the power to serve Him instead of ourselves. But there is an important warning attached to His grace: *“Therefore it says, ‘God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’”*
- God is not ambivalent toward us. He is either standing against us when we pridefully worship ourselves, or He is gracious to us as we humble ourselves before Him.

V. How can my family humble ourselves?

- James 4:7-10; Matthew 5:3-5
- ***The first step is to intentionally submit to God.***
- The first part of submitting to God is ***fighting our sinful influences***. God tells us to resist the Devil. We need to equip our kids to recognize demonic attacks and respond accordingly.
- The flip-side of resisting the devil is ***drawing closer to God***. True repentance is moving from sin to the Savior. We can’t merely stop doing wrong without starting to live righteously.
- ***We must live righteously because we desire righteously.*** What works itself out in our hands starts first in our hearts. It starts with our motivation and moves into our behavior.
- In order to stop sinning, ***we must see our adultery for what it really is and be broken by it.***
 - First, we must honestly recognize ourselves for what we really are. We are spiritually destitute.
 - Second, that reality should rock us to our core. Instead of brazenly laughing at our own iniquity, we should be grieved on a cellular level for our highhanded sin against our loving Creator. And that should lead us to meekly, humbly submit to God.
 - When we do that, God exalts us. He lifts our heads. He enables us to live in a way that pleases Him.
- If you have bickering, argumentative children, I would recommend you use the 4 Stages of parenting to Teach your kids the truth about their desires and spiritual adultery, Interpret the situation for them and call them to apologize and repent, Counsel them by showing them a better way, and Train them by helping them to reinforce on a daily basis what they’ve learned.
- Remember, intentional, premeditated parenting takes time. You wouldn’t want your doctor to zip through your surgery as quickly as possible just to get it done. You’d want him to take his time to do it the right way. You are being used by God to help perform surgery on a child. Don’t rush it. Take your time to Teach, Interpret, Counsel, and Train your kids.

VI. What does that kind of life produce?

- If we understand the wickedness of self-worship and tyrannical living, we will be grieved, we will turn to God for help, He’ll graciously give us everything we need for life and godliness, by the power of the Holy Spirit we won’t serve self, but instead we’ll faithfully submit to God, desiring what He desires and deriving pleasure from holy living. And we will not be tempted to argue or fight or murder because we will trust the Lord and — as Matthew 5 teaches us — we will be able to rejoice and be glad when people insult and persecute and lie about us . . . not fight.
- We fight because we want to be God, so submission to Him is the only way we’ll ever find help for our fighting. There’s no other formula.