

HOW TO GET ALONG WITH GOD AND PEOPLE

Part 9 of Foundations 260. Acts 15-16; James 3-5.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. March 9, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible teaches us how to get along with God and people.

- That's something worth exploring.

JAMES 4:1-10 (CSB)

1 What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? 2 You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God. 5 Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely?

6 But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

7 Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

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

THE SITUATION IN JAMES

The situation was a conflict in the congregation.

- "What is the source of wars and fights among you?" - verse 1.

- The conflict was serious enough to be called a “war” and “murder” - v. 2.
- That may be hyperbole to indicate that we can kill with our words.
- The passage is addressed to the whole congregation: “you” is plural.
- Hopefully, today’s teaching prepares us to resolve our conflicts.

WHAT BRINGS CONFLICT IN A CHURCH? Verses 1-5

The passage describes four interconnected sources of conflict with God:

- Hostility toward God - verse 4.
- Spiritual adultery - verse 4. For example: Jeremiah 31:21; Hosea 3:1; Ezekiel 23:45.
- Friendship with the world - verse 4.
- Pride - verse 6.

All of the above are also the sources of conflict with people:

- Verses 1-3 describe the symptoms of spiritual adultery, friendship with the world and pride: passions (or cravings), unmet desires, coveting, not obtaining, not praying, and wrong motives.
- Conflict with people is inevitable when we put ourselves first, reject God’s supremacy, and refuse to follow his will and ways.

If you’re at war with God, you must seek peace. Jesus is the peacemaker.

- Jesus made peace with God on the cross.
- Turn from your self and sin. Turn to Jesus by faith.
- “Lord, I am a sinner in need of a Savior. Please cleanse my guilt, wash away my sins, forgive me, give me new life, and restore me to the Father. Amen.”

WHAT BRINGS PEACE? Verses 6-10

1. God's help brings peace.

- He gives us “greater grace” - verse 6.
- This is not referring to **saving** grace that forgives our sins and gives us new life through faith in Jesus Christ.
- This is **sanctifying** grace that gives us power to overcome pride.
- God wants to help us resolve conflicts.

2. God will help us on one condition: We must humble ourselves.

- “Humble yourselves before the Lord” (verse 10) because he “gives grace to the humble (verse 6).
- Humility is described in verses 7-9.
- Humility is saying yes to God and his help, and saying no to sinful pride and the devil's lies.

GETTING ALONG WITH GOD AND PEOPLE

There are three decisions we can all make today to live humbly by grace, and at peace with God and people:

- Listen to God and people. Try to understand their point of view. See James 1:19-21.
- De-escalate. Don't sulk or shout to get your own way. Wait for the Lord. See James 1:19-21.
- Cooperate. Look for common ground and ways to get along. Leave room for God's leading and be willing to change your mind.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's March 9th teaching and study guide.
- What were the highlights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- What is the connection between obtaining peace with God and living at peace with people? Explore the following references to generate an answer: Romans 5:1; 12:18; hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:9.
- What are helpful ways to de-escalate a conflict with someone? Refer to Colossians 3:1-11 for insights.
- How does a gentle answer turn away wrath? (Proverbs 15:1-2).?

Prayers

- Pray for everyone associated with the Cornerstone to find saving grace.
- Pray for us all to live by sanctifying grace that supports humility and peace.
- Pray Colossians 1:9-13 for the group and the Cornerstone.