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WARS OF PASSION

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“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” (James 4:1)

When asking believers why they are so frustrated, the answer often received is that they are engaged in spiritual warfare, they become sensitive due to temporary distress or difficult circumstances. Given that,

they justify their stormy reactions and their negative or critical dialogue about themselves and others. I believe that these types of reactions sometimes flow out of difficult situations, but I also believe that many of the struggles inside us and toward those around us

★ **Many of the struggles inside us and toward those around us come out of one very serious thing: our impatient lusts that war inside us; evil, selfish desires in our members that will not crucify themselves with Christ.**



come out of one very serious thing: our impatient lusts that war inside us; evil, selfish desires in our members that will not crucify themselves with Christ. These desires (lusts) become clear in many ways: coveting to have something that others have: more money, greater status or recognition, things which in the end only bring restlessness and conflict inside and around us.

▶ **1. DESIRE (LUST) FOR WORLDLY PLEASURES BRINGS US WARFARE.**

“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” (James 4:1)

I believe that all will agree about one thing – in our flesh wages an on-going war. This is a war of our members against God’s law. Because of our flesh

✦ **Our flesh wars inside of us against the law of God and principles which are given to us for the freedom we have in Christ’s law of life.**

and sin we are surrendered to sin; all that is in us may at times be loyal to the old way of life, which wars inside of us against the law of God and principles which are given to us for the freedom we have in Christ’s law of life.

The Apostle Paul, as an example, wrote to the Romans about his own war and said that he sees that in himself a war is taking place against God’s statutes. “For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Romans 7:22-23)

Hence, there is a war going on between God’s laws and the law of sin which is constantly warring against us alone. But this war, although sometimes can be tiring, would not be as hard for us if we were surrendered and humbled before God and crucified. “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:24) When I say surrendered I don’t mean only mentally

surrendered in some sort of nice and holy behavior or church attendance, but surrendered to God in all our desires which create in us and around us conflict and impatience.

If we, as believers, have not died with Christ and have not crucified our flesh and the passions of this world we will be caught in constant complaining about momentary difficult situations, we will be dissatisfied, full of criticism and negative attitudes, and condemnation of others (for things we ourselves do); a war will be constantly taking place inside of us and will manifest in wrong reactions and arguments with those around us.

I also believe that the greatest reason for these fights is that today's believers have given over to the law of sin and the lusts of this world. There is a greater desire for material wealth, for status and recognition on the job, in the church and among their peers. These passions begin a war in our members, among Christ's body and among our family members. Often fleshly behavior, debauchery and the selfish desires of many believers in the church

are repeatedly packaged in spiritual "love" and mystery which sometimes overwhelm even healthy minds and unfortunately God's law, and bring out great damage to the body of Christ until the devil himself gains advantage.

These believers may appear to be very godly. James goes on to say that they "do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." (James 4:3) Therefore, God is not to blame; we are the guilty party because we pray with wrong motives, seeking for wrong things. One of the reasons why many Christians today are not emotionally stable is because they have not crucified their flesh and do not want to bring their bodies under submission to God's law of freedom. They would rather manipulate with their prayers and soulish behavior, fleeing

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from responsibilities and submission to clear biblical life principles.

When we speak with God, do we speak with Him and pray only in order to fulfill our selfish desires and launch our own plans, or do we pray and intercede because we love Him, we want to know Him and do His will. Do we neglect the principles He laid out in His Word while engaging in “spiritual warfare”. Spiritual warfare cannot replace obedience to God; it will not help when seeking to fulfill selfish desires or perhaps disguise wrong motives. Spiritual warfare only helps if we are submitted to His will, only then will warring in prayer be heard.

That’s why John said that in prayer we will receive, if we keep God’s Word and do that which is pleasing to Him. And whatever we ask we receive from Him,

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because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 John 3:22)

▶ **2. DESIRE FOR PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD.**

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? (James 4:4-5)

It’s not a sin to enjoy oneself and to rest in the good things that the Lord has given us to enjoy with a thankful heart, but if that pleasure is detrimental to our delight in the Lord then it becomes sin and at enmity with God.

Many believers, as they begin to rest and enjoy themselves, call for a balanced life but often in a wrong context. Where they would need to be balanced they often are not and where they would need to be radical

they talk about balance. The facts are that we want to be friends with the world, whether or not we become enemies of God because desires of this world draw us away from Him. As we draw away from God, regardless of our own religiosity or church attendance, we simply fall away. Many who have fallen away from the Lord and given themselves to sin and their old way of life can confirm for us with certainty that it did not happen overnight. Rather one of the reasons for their backslide was because little by little they pulled away from the Lord, and in the end they fell away entirely. "For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry." (Psalm 73:27)

God jealously yearns for the spirit that inhabits us from the beginning of the world, because it is the core of our faith – our spirit longs for a living and ever-increasing life relationship with Jesus. Christ longs to be glorified through us and to proclaim His will to those around us, but this is simply impossible if we, His body, are away from Him. The reason for our distance

is because we are so negative, argumentative, and emptied of love. This is why new people don't come and revival is absent. This is why we fall away from Him, the reason for our divisions and dissatisfaction is revealed – we have let go of our true and living relationship with Him. When and if we pray, we pray only to realize our own ambitions, desires, and plans which we alone have prepared, yet are not even sure if they apart of His will.

This is exactly why the Apostle John emphasized the importance of not loving the world neither the things in the world because we will lose the love of the Father. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in

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him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world." (1 John 2:15-16)

Lust of the flesh is nothing more than exaggerated concern and ambition for satisfaction for various momentary physical desires. Lust of the eyes is a craving for accumulation of material things: the god to which many believers have bowed the knee – the god of materialism. Pride of life is being overly concerned with status, titles and importance. All of this pride of stipulated passion draws us away from God; it is the work of God's enemies and in the end leads to the rough waters of sin and eternal death. Let's not deceive ourselves with dangerous theologies and beliefs, which our selfish passions seek for. Let's throw away all falsely

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packaged spirituality, phony love, soulishness and prosperity. Let's not deceive ourselves because the Word clearly says that, "For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Galatians 6:8)

► **3. THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: HUMBLE OURSELVES, DRAW NEAR, AND SURRENDER TO GOD.**

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:6-7)

Believers sometimes complicate very simple things in order to resolve their own problems; they mystify life's circumstances, assume the role of a victim, or refuse to receive practical counsel because they realize that in the end they must change their attitudes. The solution to all these inward and outward conflicts is simple – to humble ourselves and surrender to God because He will be merciful to those who are humble. "But He gives

more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6)

The cure for these evil selfish passions is humility. Pride will always work selfishness and self-centeredness in us, often it leads us to the conclusion that we actually deserve all that we see, touch, and desire because of life's hardships. Pride awakens in us an appetite for passion. The only freedom from these cravings is to humble ourselves before God, realizing that we only need His recognition and approval.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the most important thing to us is to please Him and to receive His recognition. Only then will we be able to see that all the worldly attractions are nothing more than cheap imitations for what God offers us – peace with Him, peace with ourselves and with those around us.

Nothing in this world can fill us and bring us peace and reconciliation like surrender to God. We can come to freedom from these passionate wars if we draw near to God and cry out to Him,

knowing that we will find greater grace in humility, in crucifying of our members with its passions and desires. "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Galatians 5:24)

Inward conflicts and old habits with which we are faced in the flesh, and which are negatively manifested to those around us, must birth one kind of fruit – we must decide to crucify our sinful nature, we need to daily surrender to the Lord our sinful nature. We must daily crucify our flesh and die to self in order to draw near to God so He can give us His power and strength in the Holy Spirit to resist the devil. The Apostle Paul goes on to write, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another." (Galatians 5:25-26) If we humble ourselves before God, and if His approval of us is important, we will not have the need

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to envy others or struggle with them in order to prove something.

James also wrote that we must come to God in humility and meekness. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." (James 4:8-10)

In these last days of trials and tribulations, the moment has come to surrender all our conflicts to the Lord. Its not enough to just write a new set of rules for good behavior, although sometimes that's not a bad idea, rather we need to truly humble ourselves and

cry out to the Lord for help and decide to resist the devil. Only then will we be victorious over our lustful desires.

Our worth is in the Lord, not in climbing the corporate ladder. He will give us satisfaction through His love and strength regardless of our human limitations; He will lift us up so we can be at peace with ourselves and those around us. Therefore, draw near to God!

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