

BOWING DOWN BEFORE HIM

JAMES 4:7-12

Have you been at end of your rope?

–where there's nowhere to go but up?

Some people I've known have gone through hard times.

Young friend with 3 children trusted Christ. Days later was convicted of fraud charge against company he's part owner of. He spent year in jail away from family—just as his life turned around.

Christians in Sudan—other places. Watch families starve. Persecuted physically. Children sold as slaves to people of other religions. Teens abused sexually. Leaders in jail.

Until **we've** reached **end of our rope**, we'll never understand passage!

James writes people who endure attacks for faith.

Lost jobs. Families want nothing to do with them.

How do we respond when pressure rises?

How do we talk about people who make different choices

How do we talk about people who criticize us
for decisions WE make under pressure?

Among suffering, scattered Jewish Christians, **there wasn't peace, but conflicts & quarrels.**

Living faith produces peace under pressure

Source of peace 3:13-18 Contrast:

Dealing with pressure from **MAN'S** perspective
leads to **CONFLICTS**. 13-16

Dealing with pressure from **GOD'S** perspective
leads to **PEACE**. 17-18

PEACE is found in *understanding* **GOD'S** perspective

So why do **God's people** fight & quarrel?

Source of fighting 4:1-6

Trying to solve problem our way leads to frustration

All that struggle; we *still* don't get what we want!

Why *aren't* we satisfied when we try to solve problems OUR way?

1. We don't look to *God* for what we need 1-2 We try to solve it *ourselves*!

2. We ask with wrong motives. 3

We seek *our* comfort—we want what *WE* want!
—instead of seeking *God's* will.

3. We seek to be friends with the world. 4-6

We cling to hope we can stay on good terms with world.
We don't realize: to make friends with world,
we must leave God out!

We try to improve our situation.

We don't realize superiority of God's plan.

This attitude is pride; God opposes it!

If this isn't way to find peace, what IS?

How *DO* we resolve conflicts & quarrels *among US*?

SOLUTION FOR FIGHTING 4:7-5:6

Underlying principle reveals solution to our conflicts: **4:6** “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”

When we try to escape affliction our way, it's **PRIDE!**

We think we have a better idea!

2 key words show us how to solve the problem:

Not words we *like* to hear—not *popular* solution!

Submission & dependence!

3 solutions eliminate quarrels & lead to peace

1. Submit to God 7-10 builds on preceding principle:

Turn from pride; ***humble ourselves before the Lord.***

Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, & he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God & he'll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, & purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched, mourn & weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning & your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord & he'll exalt you.

Solution ***begins & ends*** with submission to God

3 exhortations flow out of submission to God;

Submitting to God involves resisting the devil, so he'll flee. 7b

Rather than pursuing **Satan's plan**, **resist him!**

Satan's plan: leave God out; fight for our rights!

When we understand alternatives & make commit-ment to do things God's way, Satan eventually quits trying! –Doesn't mean he won't attack!

We must take stand: do it God's way; **NOT** Satan's

Submitting to God involves drawing near to God so that He'll draw near to us 8a

When we seek God first, He comes to our aid.

Submitting to God involves turning away from our erroneous path 8b-10

Having laid foundation of seeking God 1st,

lists ways to change our course:

Cleanse self from sin: not trusting God; seeking self. Make single-minded commitment to follow Jesus”

Lament our sinful, self-willed responses

Humble ourselves before Him

Concludes as he began: God gives grace to those who humble ourselves before Him—who submit to Him.

When we submit to God, He lifts us up => PEACE

2. Submit to one another 11 *Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law & judges the law. If you judge the law, you aren't a doer of the law but a judge.*

2nd step to resolve conflict & quarreling: **respect others**

It's easy, esp. under pressure, to criticize others.

Stop criticizing & judging other people. 11a

We tend to judge two groups:

People who cause us to suffer.

When we criticize others, we fail to realize true source of all that happens in our lives: **God**.

His plan includes affliction, **for our good**. Ch. 1

2nd **People who don't suffer as much as we do.**

They must be less spiritual than we are!

Perhaps they compromise to get better treatment

When we judge others, we aren't obeying God's law of love for others. 11b

We don't love our neighbor as ourselves.

God's only One qualified to judge people.

12 There's only one lawgiver & judge, he who's able to save & destroy. Who are you to judge your neighbor?

God evaluates; He'll repay what each one deserves
World doesn't like this principle.

We don't like to submit to each other—fall in same trap.

Final solution for conflict when pressure rises:

3. Depend on the Lord 4:13-5:6 [Next weeks]

Not our plans 4:13-17 Not our funds 5:1-6

How can WE avoid fighting in hard times?

BOW BEFORE THE LORD!

SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER!

**Are we following James advice for PEACE,
 or would we rather FIGHT than switch?**