

A faith that works

James 4v1-12

Introduction

- world at war

Conflict analysis (v1-5)

- with each other
 - warring of passions (v1-2a)
 - neglect of prayer (v2b-3)
- with God
 - spiritual adultery (v4a)
 - spiritual friendship (v4b)
 - divine jealousy (v5)

Conflict resolution (v6-12)

- with God
 - humble yourselves before God (v6,10)
 - submit yourselves to God (v7-9)
- with each other
 - breaking the law of love (v11)
 - taking the place of God (v12)

DISPUTABLE MATTERS

'Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, charity in all things' (Peter Meiderlin, c.1620)

'Whenever equally biblical Christians, who are equally anxious to understand the teaching of Scripture and to submit to its authority, reach different conclusions, we should deduce that evidently Scripture is not crystal clear in this matter, and therefore can afford to give one another liberty...Unity in the primary truths and freedom in the secondary, while preserving love in all situations.' (John Stott: *Evangelical Truth*, 1999)

1. Baptism: baptise only adult believers or infants as well? And by immersion or sprinkling?
2. Lord's Supper: how formal or informal should it be? How often should we celebrate it? Is it purely a memorial, or does Christ meet with us in a special way through it?
3. Church government: episcopal, presbyterian, or congregationalist?
4. Liturgy: serviced with liturgy or without, formal or informal? Set prayers or extempore?
5. Praise: contemporary songs and instruments, or psalms / hymns and organ? Hands in pockets or up in the air?
6. Charismata: are any gifts not available for today?
7. Women's ministry: which ministries are open to women? How does male headship apply on the ground?
8. Ecumenism: what level of involvement is appropriate with non-evangelical churches?
9. Old Testament prophecy: how are we to understand its fulfilment, especially with regard to Israel?
10. Sanctification: what degree of holiness is possible for the people of God on earth?
11. The state: what should be the relations between church and state?
12. Mission: are mission and evangelism synonymous? What is the place of social action?
13. Eschatology: how do we understand what will happen in the end-times? (Tribulation, rapture, millenium)
14. Alcohol: can you be godly and drink alcohol?
15. Cultural engagement: how far should Christians engage with contemporary culture? Is it appropriate to go to the cinema and theatre and read novels? Where should the lines be drawn?
16. The environment: to what extent does the mandate to care for the creation still apply and is still a priority? Must Christians be committed to recycling?
17. Life in the Spirit: what does the Spirit-filled life look like? And how do you get there?
18. Bible translation: is there one superior Bible translation all Christians should use? (eg.KJV)
19. Predestination: has God predestined people to be saved or is it our free choice to believe?
20. Sacred space: is a church building a sacred space or are all places now the same?
21. Church year: should Christians observe the church year, celebrating Christmas and Easter and giving things up for Lent?
22. The Sabbath: is Sunday a special day on which only certain activities are appropriate?
23. Education: should you send Christian children to state schools, private schools, Christian schools, or home schools?
24. Child rearing: what form should discipline take? Should children have a set bedtime? How should you toilet-train? How many children should you have?
25. Evangelistic courses: Alpha or Christianity Explored?
26. Standard of living: what standard of living is appropriate for a Christian? How much should you spend on a car, on going out for a meal, on holidays, on Christian giving?
27. Divorce and remarriage: is it ever okay for Christians to divorce and remarry?
28. War: is it ever right for Christians to take up arms, or should you be pacifist?
29. Evolution: is evolution a process God used or did he create the world in six 24-hour days?
30. Capital punishment: is it ever right to take the life of another person in punishment for a crime?

