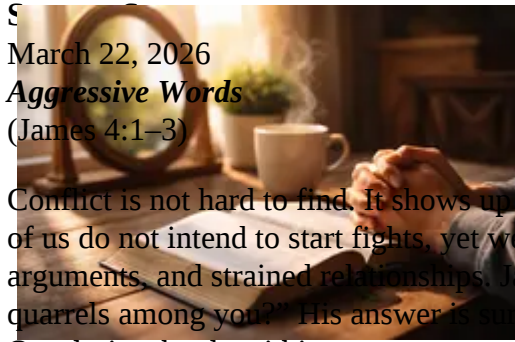


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March 22, 2026

Aggressive Words

(James 4:1–3)



Conflict is not hard to find. It shows up in families, friendships, churches, and communities. Most of us do not intend to start fights, yet we often find ourselves in tense conversations, repeated arguments, and strained relationships. James asks a penetrating question: “What causes fights and quarrels among you?” His answer is surprising. The problem is not primarily external. It is internal. Our desires battle within us.

James is writing to believers, to people who pray and worship. He says our conflicts are fueled by desires that have grown unchecked. We want to be right. We want control. We want recognition. These desires are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but when they become ultimate, they begin to rule us. When we do not get what we want, frustration spills out in quarrels and harsh words. Relationships suffer. Peace erodes. Like Cain in Genesis 4, the external conflict reflects an unresolved struggle in the heart.

James goes further. Even our prayers can be shaped by selfish motives. Instead of bringing our desires to God for transformation, we sometimes ask God to endorse them. We want God to secure what we think will finally satisfy us. The deeper issue is misplaced trust. We expect our desires to give us identity, security, or peace, things only God can provide.

The gospel reframes the problem. Where we grasp for control, Christ entrusted himself fully to God. Where we fight to win, Christ absorbed hostility and remained faithful. Grace comes first. Our identity is grounded in Christ before we change our behavior. Transformation is God’s work in us.

This week’s practice is simple: when conflict begins to rise, pause and ask, “What do I really want right now?” Name that desire honestly before God and pray, “Lord, reshape this desire.” As we surrender our inner battles to God, our words begin to soften, and the peace of Christ can guard our hearts and minds.