

Why Do We Fight So Much?

Taken from Paul Tripp's book *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

Starts to Affect my relationship
to other people

Desire ➔ Demand ➔ Need ➔ Expectation ➔ Disappointment
"I Wish" "I Will" "I Must!" "You Should" "You Didn't"



Punishment

"Because you didn't, now I won't..."
Or "Because you didn't, now I will..."

"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

Explanation of page 1:

1. “desire”—We all have desires, and it is ok to have desires. Desires motivate action. Some good desires are that my kids will honor God, or that I have a godly husband. Our desires are like the open hand with desires in it.
2. “demand”—This is when my desire is taken away and I close my fist around my desire. I can end of thinking, “Whatever it takes, I WILL have a godly husband, my kids WILL honor God...etc.”
3. “need”—This comes when I determine after not having it that I “NEED” your love, a godly husband, kids that honor God, etc.
4. “expectation”—Therefore because I think I “need” it I determine that I have a “right” to expect it.
5. “disappointment”—all this leads to disappointment

One question to ask is “Is it working for you? Are they loving you more now that you are demanding it, etc?”

Identifying Personal 'Idols'

Ask Yourself...

1. Am I willing to sin to get this?
2. Am I willing to sin if I think I'm going to lose this?
3. Do I turn to this as a 'Refuge' and comfort instead of going to God?

"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."
Jonah 2:8 (NIV)

Place a next to the items / issues that you think might be current or potential 'idols' in your life

- Performance** – especially for significant others – you try to please to get or to keep acceptance or approval. Example: for parents or spouse. When you please man rather than God, this is idolatry. If that is the case, then you are worshipping that person more than God. Fearful of what others think rather than obeying God – this is a problem.
- Performance for Self** (Perfectionism) – trying to perform up to our own standards that we have set. Can become a Pharisee. When I meet the standard, I feel good; when I don't I feel bad. Making a personal list for myself to follow that is higher than what God says.
- Performance of Others** – I make a list of what others should do. Example: For my spouse to be a good husband / wife he / she **must** do... (1,2,3, etc.). If he/she doesn't do these things, I become judgmental and unloving.
- Good Health** – My goal shouldn't be this, but to glorify God. It's OK to pray for healing but don't let getting healed become an idol. God may want you to be sick in order to glorify Himself (see John 9).
- Love of Money** – I take a promotion just to get more money
- Success** – What's a good day to you? Answering this question helps to reveal idols of the heart. What made it a good day in your mind? Usually it's "I got a lot accomplished / done." Or "I pleased significant others." Or "I got my way... Others did for me what I want them to do." Etc.
- Fairness** - Life has to be fair! (Psalm 73) "I've been trying to please God; these others aren't even trying and they prosper." This can cause you to almost forsake the faith (Psa. 73:2).

- Hurt-Free / Pain-Free Life** – I don't want to deal with problems. There shouldn't be any difficulties. I shouldn't have to go through anything unsettling... because I want peace.

- Christian Marriage and Home** – I'll be successful if my children turn out right. That can become an idol. Or I want people to look at our marriage and think we have the best marriage in the world. I cannot serve God and have joy until my spouse changes and starts doing _____ .

- Physical Appearance**
- Being respected / Admired**
- Being self-sufficient / Independent**
- A Material Thing – car, house, jewelry, etc.**
- Athletic Abilities / Achievements**
- Hobbies ~ sports, reading, whatever**
- An Ideal ("Pro-life movement, "Peace Movement," political party, etc.)**
- Being Treated Fairly**
- Success / Position / Power**
- Worldly Pleasures (drugs, alcohol, food, sex, etc)**
- Being in Control**
- Meeting Goals / Achievements**
- A Child or Children**
- Getting Married**
- Having Your 'Needs' Met**
- Other? _____**

Now write the top 5 present or potential 'idols' from your check-list onto this heart

A large heart outline is centered on the page. Inside the heart, there are five horizontal lines, each accompanied by a lightning bolt symbol. The lightning bolts are positioned to the left of the lines, and the lines are arranged vertically from top to bottom. The lightning bolts are stylized, jagged shapes pointing downwards and to the right. The horizontal lines are solid black and provide space for writing the names of the top 5 present or potential 'idols' from a check-list.

Idolatry Repentance Plan of Action

Specific Plan to “Put Off” and “Put On” new attitudes and behavior so that genuine repentance and change takes place

1. Be specific and not abstract or vague. We don’t change and grow in ‘fuzzy land.’ (“I want to be nice, or more loving” is too vague. State specifically the ways you are going to be more loving – what are you going to do? How & what are you going to think now?)
2. Make the goals attainable – be realistic
3. Be positive and not merely negative – not merely, “I won’t be critical,” but “I will express appreciation for a least two things every day.” The Bible talks about replacing sinful behavior, not just stopping wrong behavior. The joy and peace comes in doing righteousness, not just in avoiding sinfulness.

**Idols that
Need to Be
Thrown Down**

**Write out specific steps to changing in this area.
How does Your thinking need to change? What will you stop
doing? What will you begin to do?**

Idol #1	<p>New Ways of Thinking about this area / issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">----- <p>New Ways of Acting in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-----
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