

Do whatever is necessary to keep envy and strife out of your life!

Excerpt from Sparkling Gems of the Greek: Rick Renner

For where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work. [James 3:16]

STRIFE IS A KILLER:

The devil knows that envy and strife destroy relationships and long-term friendships. He is aware that if he can create envy and strife between you and the ones you love, he can ruin those special relationships that God intended to be a blessing in your life. Do you have any relationships in your life right now that are under this kind of demonic assault?

The devil doesn't just target relationships or friendships with this type of assault. He also knows how to get in between you and your church family, a ministry you love and support, or even the organization or place of business where you work. The enemy doesn't care whom he divides - he simply wants to divide!

Since envy and strife are some of the tools he uses to do this, it is crucial that you understand how to recognize envy and strife and how to stand against them!

ABOUT ENVY:

In James 3:16, the Bible says:

"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

I want you to notice the word 'envy' in this verse. It is taken from the Greek word 'zeros', and it denotes a *fierce desire to promote one's own ideas and convictions to the exclusion of everyone else*.

This word 'zeros' is where we get the word 'zealot', which describes a person who is so captivated, obsessed, and fanatical about his own cause that others perceive him as an extremist on the threshold of becoming militant.

In the case of James 3:16, this word presents a picture of a believer who is so obsessed, gripped, and preoccupied with his own view of things that he can't see or hear the view of anyone else. In fact, his militant perspective has made him lopsided in his thinking. He never takes a softer line but holds out until all the other parties admit defeat and agree with his point of view.

Therefore, the word envy in James 3:16 could be translated this way:

"For where there is a fierce desire to promote one's own ideas and convictions to the elimination of everyone else.... "

If this kind of attitude continues, it will naturally lead to the next step in this horrible sequence of events. This is where strife comes into the picture! Notice that James goes on to say, "For where envying and strife is...."

ABOUT STRIFE:

The word 'strife' is taken from the Greek word 'eritheii' - It was used by the ancient Greeks to stand for a 'political party'.

This Greek word is often translated as a 'party spirit' because of its linkage to political systems and political parties. Therefore, in order for us to understand why James used this word, we need to stop and think about the way political parties are formed and how they function.

Political parties are formed by a group of people who have similar values and views. After the party is formed, the participants develop a unified agenda; once the agenda is decided on, they create a platform. From that platform, the people begin to push their agenda and ideas, fighting fiercely to see that their party's platform is accepted and eventually put in the position of ruling and calling the shots.

In the same way, some Christians become so clouded by their ambition to see their own views adopted that they have no tolerance for anyone who sees things differently than they do. These people usually gravitate to other believers who hold similar views.

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About Strife *continued...*

Once these so-called "like--minded" Christians find each other, they naturally begin to take sides, forming a kind of allegiance. Then they begin to form agendas and develop plans to see their views pushed, promoted, and accepted. As a result, people who once stood shoulder to shoulder often end up standing on different sides of a fight with their relationships ruined and filled with hurt.

When envy and strife have made it this far, the next step in this sequence of events becomes inevitable. James 3:16 continues; "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion"

HERE COMES THE CONFUSION:

The word 'confusion' is taken from the word 'akatastasia'. It was used in New Testament times to describe *civil disobedience, disorder, and anarchy in a city, state, or government.*

By using this word, James explicitly tells us that when situations of strife and discord are allowed to *persist*, an atmosphere of anarchy sets in and begins to *destroy the relationships* once loved and cherished. Rational thinking is replaced by raw emotions, and people end up getting hurt.

James wants to make sure we understand what this kind of conduct eventually produces if this behavior isn't stopped. He goes on to say, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

EVIL REARS IT'S UGLY HEAD:

The word 'evil' is from the word 'phaulos' describing something that is *terribly bad or exceedingly vile*. We get the word 'foul' from this Greek word. James is saying that where envy and strife are permitted to operate, thus producing confusion and anarchy in relationships, they ultimately yield a foul-smelling situation!

These various Greek words in James 3:16 convey this idea:

"For where there is a fierce desire to promote one's own ideas and convictions to the exclusion of everyone else, it produces divisions so great that people end up taking sides and forming differing parties with conflicting agendas. This is a terrible event, because it creates great unrest among people who should be united. Ultimately, the whole situation becomes a stinking mess!"

But understand this: You can help stop this from happening by choosing to consider other people's opinions to be just as important as your own! Instead of pushing your own agenda, why not stop and listen to what others have to say? They may have something powerful to contribute, but if you can't hear them, you'll never benefit from their perspective.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO YIELD TO ENVY AND STRIFE!

When the opportunity for strife arises, you can beat Satan at his own game by choosing to make room for the ideas, thoughts, and opinions of others. Even if you don't agree with what they say, at least you can demonstrate that you value their right to have a differing opinion. By maintaining an attitude of staying on the same side with your fellow believers, you can put the devil on the run and keep your relationships alive, healthy, and long lasting!