

The Bulwark

NOVEMBER 2, 2025

IT DEPENDS ON WHICH ONE YOU FEED

Several years ago I taught a class entitled "Successful Adult Relations" at a community college. At one point I was trying to explain the conflict that rages within each one with respect to good and evil. A young woman in the class asked if she could share what she had been taught. I was more than happy to hear from her. While no explanation of her genetic background seemed to be needed, nevertheless she felt the need to explain she was Native American and that her grandfather would share various stories containing a moral as his grandchildren gathered around the outdoor fire pit. One of the stories focused on the inner conflict mankind faces.

According to this woman, her grandfather said that inside all of us are two powerful wolves engaged in a terrible fight. One wolf represents fear, anger, envy, sorrow, greed, falsehood, guilt, pride and all the evil that lurks within man's heart. The other wolf stands for happiness, joy, love, hope, peace, truth and all the good that man can fill in his heart. Naturally one of the grandchildren asked, "grandfather, which wolf will win?" Scratching his chin before responding, he replied, "it depends on which one you feed."

James, in his epistle writes in the

first chapter of the epistle bearing his name, *"being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."* (v.8). Then again he notes in chapter four, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded."* (v.8) There are more than a few major thoughts in James, but clearly one of them is the spiritual conflict with which we all



deal.

So, which "wolf" will be fed? *"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom."* (James 3:13) The choice is clearly up to each one, and that decision should be obvious by the comportment of one's life. Notice further as James points out in verses fourteen through sixteen. *"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."*

Okay, so that's one choice and the manifestation thereof. Now consider the other option James lays out.

"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:17-18) Now factor in what Jesus pointed out as He was drawing to a close the Sermon on the Mount. *"Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them."* (Matthew 7:20) It shouldn't be all that difficult to tell which choice has been made. Which one is it, wisdom from below or that which is from above.

So think back to that simple illustration given by the grandfather to his grandchildren, which "wolf" are you feeding? (wbe)

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