

## James: Living Counter-Culturally Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2018

James 4:11,12

### Introduction

***“A Christ-follower is to love and speak truth to his brother NOT speak evil, slander or judge him.”***

#### I. Speaking evil shows our disrespect of others

Speaking evil means to ‘not defame or denigrate.’ James's readers had fallen into the habit of criticizing one another, and so he says, *“Stop speaking against one another.”*

*“Keep your conduct among Gentiles honorable, so that when they **speak against you as evildoers**, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”* 1 Peter 2:12

*“...having a good conscience, so that, **when you are slandered**, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”* 1 Peter 3:16

The reason he gives is that the one who criticizes or judges his brother "speaks against the law and judges it."

Slander and judgment go hand in hand or two sides of same coin!

#### II. Speaking evil shows our disrespect of the law

The law referred to is probably the command of [Leviticus 19:18](#): "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The person who does so places himself above the law and, by his action, declares that law to be a bad or unnecessary statute. Rather than submitting to it and "keeping it," he passes judgment on its validity and sets it aside.

The question we must ask ourselves is, ***“Am I denigrating the law of God by the way I speak about others?”***

#### III. Speaking evil shows our disrespect of God

In speaking evil or passing judgment, this critic of his brother has usurped a position of authority that is reserved for God alone.

God is the "one Lawgiver and Judge." Since he gave the law, he is qualified to judge those who are responsible to keep it.

That he is "able to save and destroy" is proof that he is able to enforce the law, rewarding those who keep it, and punishing those who violate it.

"But who are you to judge your neighbor?" catches the full force of the Greek construction.

**With his typical bluntness, James crushes any right his readers may have claimed to sit in judgment over their neighbors. Instead, it is to root out the harsh, unkind, critical spirit that continually finds fault with others.**

*"...then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind)" 1 Kings 8:39*

*"Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things." Romans 2:1,2*

*"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you." Matt. 7:1,2*

#### **IV. The Gospel and Evil Speech**

Because Jesus died on the cross, he has redeemed our tongues and gives us the power to speak love and truth to others.

*"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:29-32*

*"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14*

*"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Colossians 4:6*

#### **V. Conclusion**

The message of James in this passage is very clear – we have enough trouble keeping ourselves from sin so let's start pursuing Jesus and worrying less about sinfully speaking against others.