

**Sermon or Lesson: James 4:11-12** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Corrupt Use Of The Law

INTRO: Have you ever observed in a classroom of small children when one child stands up and starts dictating orders to the other children as if he/she were now the teacher and in charge? In your mind, is your reaction to this, "Hey, kid. Who do you think you are?"

In our study today, it will become glaringly apparent that we adults do this too.

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READ: James 4:11-12, with verse 10 for context

v.11 - READ

[Lesson Question: What are the ramifications of what we are doing when we speak against a brother, particularly in respect to the law?]

SECTION POINT: Speaking against a brother amounts to perverted use of the law.

"brothers"... "one another" - still addressing believers in the church and ministries

"slander" = Strong's #2635 - "speak against; to be a traducer, i.e. to slander"; to speak evil of

"slander" = (AHD) "Oral communication of false or malicious statements injurious to a person's reputation"

"traduce" = (AHD) "To cause humiliation or disgrace to by making malicious and false statements."

"judges" = Strong's #2919 - "judging; to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish"

"judges" = Zodiates #2919 - "to separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, choose out the good, to form an opinion; to judge in one's own mind as to what is right, proper, expedient; to deem, decide, determine; to sit in judgment on any person; to pass judgment upon, condemn;"

- - The command here is that believers are not to speak against any other believers, by implication: whether publicly or privately; whether in church, in a ministry, or outside in the secular world; whether the information is true or not; whether their seems to be a good justifying reason or not; whether other persons are speaking against that believer or not; and whether a person has been seriously mistreated by the other believer or not. Logically of course, there are exceptions to this command, but generally this command applies in most situations for most believers.

- - Speaking against a brother is, in effect, judging that brother.

- - Judging that brother is, in effect, speaking against the law.

- - Judging that brother is also, in effect, judging the law.

- - Judging the law is, in effect, a blatant failure to keep the law.
  - - Judging the law is also, in effect, a blatant effort to inappropriately use the law to judge that brother.
  
  - - By default, because we are believers, God directs and places us under the law, under His commands and directives, as delineated in the law.
  - - All of us who are true believers are on equal footing or position under the authority of the law.
  - - None of us believers is on a footing or position of being at a level above being under the law.
  - - Therefore, none of us believers has the authority to use the law in judgment against another person or be above the law, wherein the law applies to others but not to oneself. Properly we are to stay in our position under the law, be recipients of it, subject to its authority over us, and obligated to obey or keep it.
  - - By extension then, when we speak against or judge another brother, we are usurping our position of low standing under the law to forcefully grasp a higher standing we are not entitled to.
  - - Furthermore then, we are, in effect, trying to raise ourselves up, which is pride and self-exaltation, rather than waiting upon the Lord to lift us up. (v.10)
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## v.12 - READ

[Lesson Question: Define our relationship with the use of the law in comparison to God's relationship with the use of the law.]

SECTION POINT: Speaking against and judging others attempts to usurp God in the use of the law.

- - The position to sit over the law and to use it in judgment of other persons is reserved for God alone.
- - The One who made the law, gave the law, and administers it is the only one who has the right, authority, means, power, knowledge, and the divine ability to implement it and enforce it upon humans.
- - He is the only One who does not break any part of the law. (cf. v.2:10)
- - He is the One who alone determines and holds our eternal destiny in His hands, using the law as the standard measurement by which He is "able to save and destroy" eternally. (cf. vv.2:12-13)
- - Thereby, He is the only One above the law.
  
- - The law was created for God to judge us with but we are not allowed to use it to judge each other with; it is a tool made to be used by His hands to judge and not by ours.
- - The proper usage of the law is being perverted when we, the intended targets, use it for our purposes to target others, to put oneself at the level of God and "sit in judgment on [the law]". (v.11c)

- - God's mercy is treated with contempt when we, who have received mercy, turn to judge each other, thereby essentially judging others without mercy. (cf. vv. 2:12-13; cf. Parable of the Unforgiving Servant - Matthew 18:21-35)
  - - Furthermore, the law through Christ extends mercy and grace to those who do not deserve it, which is to us believers; by judging others we flaunt this mercy / grace / forgiveness we have received and instead extend condemnation. (cf. Ephesians 4:29-32)
  - - Even more problematic, in our misuse of the law to judge others, we make determinations based on worldly standards, which of course are corrupted and are polluting to practicing religion that God accepts. (vv.2:4; 1:27)
  - - Therefore, even though we may think we are doing good or right when we judge others, we are in effect supplanting the goodness and perfection of the law with evil or with corrupted content derived from our own corrupted worldly perspective and imperfect personal moral code. (vv.1:25; 2:8,4; 4:4)
  - - We have no right, authority, means, power, knowledge, or ability to properly sit in judgment on the law, which God alone is qualified for.
  - - Consequently, in reality we presume to be God when we judge our neighbor.
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**BIG IDEA:** We believers are not qualified to properly use the law to speak against or judge others, and in so doing, we are using the law corruptly.

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#### IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - This passage is saying that if you speak against any of your fellow believers or another person, you are judging them and sinning.
- - The correct response to this passage, then, is to shut your mouth when it comes to speaking against other persons.
- - Speak nothing negative about another person.
- This will require you to do:
  - - - - self-training,
  - - - - self-restraint,
  - - - - extinguishing your established speaking habits and reactions,
  - - - - constant self-monitoring of thoughts,
  - - - - and persistent guarding of your words.
- So, what are you going to do about the negative words coming out of your mouth about other people?
  - - - - Judging them?
  - - - - Speaking against them?
  - - - - The verbal attacks?
  - - - - The gossip?
  - - - - The accusations?
  - - - - The critical comments?
  - - - - The griping and complaining comments?
  - - - - The degrading comments?

- - - The destructive comments?  
- - - The evil comments?

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