



Epistle of James

James 4:11-12 - Speaking Against One Another

- Review *James 4:5-10*: God's Desire and Plan in Conflicts
 - By the work and power of the *Holy Spirit*, understand and make *grace* God's greatest gift; therefore, when we are *humble*, we are the recipients.
 - Series of commands (*aorist imperative*) that God directs to us:
 - *Submit, resist, draw near, cleanse, purify, be miserable, mourn, weep, be turned to, humble yourselves.*
 - Aren't these also a demonstration of the work and power of the Holy Spirit?

• ***James 4:11 - Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.***

- Constable – 'Having dealt with the source of interpersonal and inner personal conflicts that believers in particular and all people generally experience, James dealt next with a different aspect of the same problem. He did so to motivate his readers further to forsake the philosophy of the world that puts self first. Criticizing others is dangerous not only because it is a form of selfishness but also **because the critic exalts himself even over God when he criticizes.**'



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- *Do not speak (katalaleō) evil of one another, brethren.*
 - The imperative continues here, but here the *tense is present* – now!
 - The Greek translation indicates to *speak evil* or *against*, to *criminate* or to *slander*
 - » *1 Peter 2:12 - having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*
 - McCalley - ‘The grammatical construction views this as a practice going on and forbids its continuance.’
- Who is *one another*?
 - *He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother,*
 - Do you think that this means that we can’t *speak evil* of those in the world?
 - » *1 Cor 5:9-12 - I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:.. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?*
- How should we interpret *judging (krino) our brother*?



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- *krino* - to subject to censure
 - » Rom 2:1 - Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that **judges**: for wherein thou **judges** another, thou **condemns** thyself; for thou that **judges** does the same things.

– What are the consequences of such *judgement*?

- He *speaks evil of the law and judges the law*.

– *But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.*

- Why does James mention the *law (nomos)* and which *law* is this?
 - *nomos* - of the Mosaic law, and referring, according to the context, either to the volume of the law or to its contents and can be preceded by the article or without the article. Here in *James*, there is no article.

» Lev. 19:15-18 - ***You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.***

- But although the law is holy, are we not under law but grace?



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- » *James 2:8 - If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” (Lev 19:18) you do well;*
- » *Gal 5:13 - For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
- » *Phil 2:3 - Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*
- » *Rom 2:13 - for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;*

- Don't we find interesting that this whole theme follows James' addressing sins of the tongue (*James 3:5-12*), and that this evil-speaking (*verse 11*) stems from the flesh and serves as the basis for *James 4:1*.
 - » *James 4:1 - Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*
- *JF&B* – This is the last mention of the law in the New Testament. Alford rightly takes the “law” to be the old moral law applied in its comprehensive spiritual fullness by Christ: “the law of liberty.”
 - » *James 1:25 - But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

• ***James 5:12 – There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?***



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- *There is one Lawgiver*
 - And the ILG adds *and judge.*
 - For interest, let's look at the entire ILG iteration:
 - *One is lawgiver and judge, the (one) being able to save and destroy, thou send who art the (one) judging the (thy) neighbor.*
 - *Lawgiver (nomothetēs)* here is the only NT use and comes from the frequently used term for the Mosaic law *nomos*.
 - *-thetes* comes from the Greek, *tithēmi* which means to put in place or set up.
- *who is able to save and to destroy.*
 - *Present participle (is able)* connected to 2 *aorist active infinitive verbs (save, destroy)*.
 - Who else can this be but God himself.
 - Well describer in many OT and NT scriptures; one example.
 - » *Deut 32:39 - Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal;. Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.*
- *Who are you to judge another?*
 - Notice that this is not brethren but neighbor!



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Constable – ‘James was speaking of judging other people without divine authorization to do so. Obviously, God has delegated the responsibility of judging some civil acts to human governments, some church conduct to elders, and the behavior of children to their parents. Judging our equals is a common sport, but it is inappropriate for mere mortals. **We all are responsible to God ultimately and must leave the judgment of His servants up to Him.**’

» *Rom 14:1-13 - Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things..... So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*