

James 4:11-12

Defamation and
Condemnation Must Cease



Personal condemnation of others is condemnation of the law of the Lord (4:11)

11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

- “*speak evil against*” - to repudiate beliefs or behavior declaring them wrong
- It is natural to feel superior and find fault.
- Measuring people by personal standards of belief and behavior is evil and divisive.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
- Such verbal evaluations are not from humble hearts looking to aid someone in need.
 - These are faultfinding activities meant to breed contention against others while seeking personal loyalty and support.
 - If the desire was humble helpfulness, the light would shine on truth in order to aid and encourage, not to substantiate a partisan spirit.
 - Philippians 2:1-4

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The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law.

- Participating in critical condemnation of others is not a trivial or insignificant.
- Promoting personal standards and partisan loyalty demeans the law of God and loyalty to God.
- Personal agendas depreciate the law of God, judging the law of God less significant.

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

- James condemns self-proclaimed superiority.
- This is the same superiority attitude Jesus condemned in the Pharisees and scribes.
 - Matthew 15:8-9

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- Their attitudes of superiority and condemnation are so great, they are busy finding personal fault with their brothers and sisters in Christ and feeling justified to do so.
- Such people are not upholding the truth but breaking the law of our Lord.
 - Leviticus 19:16,18
 - Mark 10:42-45
- James makes a concerned judgment about them that they are disobeying God and judging His law as irrelevant.

God is the only one with the credentials of a lawgiver and judge (4:12)

“There is only one lawgiver and judge,”

- The right to formulate laws and hold others accountable is an exclusive right belong to God.
- We are responsible to uphold the truth, and encourage others to do the same, by speaking the truth in love.
- When followers of Jesus fail to obey the Lord and walk in truth, we have the responsibility to enforce the truth and exercise restorative discipline for the disobedient.
 - Matthew 7:1-6
 - Matthew 18:15-17
 - Galatians 6:1-2
 - 1 Corinthians 5

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“he who is able to save and to destroy.”

- Ultimate authority belongs to the Lord our God.
 - Matthew 10:28
- The people of God have no right to exercise the authority to save or destroy.

But who are you to judge your neighbor?

- What right do you have to judge your neighbor?
- You have no right; the right belongs to our Lord alone.

Questions to Consider

- What are the areas of your life where defamation and condemnation need to cease?
- Where are you thinking too highly of your personal opinions and personal perspectives?
- In what areas do you need to be humbly applying biblical judgment and discipline?

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