

# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## *“He Who Speaks Against a Brother”*

Scripture Reading: JAMES 4:11-12

- ) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
- ) **SLIDES 7**. Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 8**. Today we continue in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #23. I have titled today’s message *“He Who Speaks Against a Brother”* (4:11).
- ) **SLIDE 9**. To properly interpret JAMES 4:11-12, we must remember two very important rules of proper Scripture interpretation: 1) Context and 2) Scripture interprets Scripture.
- ) Context is sometimes called the 20/20 rule. Explain. And we also know that Scripture interprets what? Scripture will never contradict itself. Failure to follow these two basic rules will lead one to improperly interpret the Word of God.
- ) **SLIDE 10**. Looking at v11-12 at face value, one could easily misinterpret these verses and conclude that we are not to judge our brothers and sisters in Christ. After all, it does say that if we judge our brother, we speak against the law.
- ) **SLIDE 11**. But is this what James is telling us? No. Scripture interprets Scripture. I know this by what James writes in 5:19-20. It is impossible for a Christian to point out a sin in another Christian without judging them to some degree.
- ) **SLIDE 12**. OK. Since the Word of God cannot contradict itself, what IS James saying in 4:11-12? I use a NASB translation Bible. I like this translation. But sometimes, another translation can help us with the meaning of a passage. The NIV words JAMES 4:11 as this. The NKJV says *“who speaks evil against a brother”* and the NIV says *“do not slander one another.”*

- ) Speaking slander against another and speaking evil against another are synonymous. And the Bible does call slanderous speech a sin. Let's follow that train of thought.
- ) **SLIDE 13**. What is slander? Webster.
- ) Knowing this, let's ask this question. What is the context of chapter 4? Answer. The brethren were lusting and envying which resulted in quarrels, conflicts, fights, and murder.
- ) OK. What started all this? I believe these brethren were saying ungodly things (slanderous and evil things) against and about each other that led to the envy and coveting that led to the quarrels and the fights.
- ) That would make sense now, wouldn't it? I'm sure any of us in here would get upset if our names and reputations were being slandered (false charges and misrepresentations) all over the community, at work, or even at church.
- ) So, what James is telling these brethren (and us) is that we should not be speaking evil (especially slanderous things) against a brother or sister in Christ because 1) slander is sinful and 2) because of where such things can lead a person. That sin of slander has the potential of leading to many other sins. And in this situation, it did. Quarrels, fights, murder.
- ) There is a difference between judging truthfully and judging falsely. We are to judge truthfully and that judgment would be by Biblical standards. Again, we will talk more about this when we get to JAMES 5:19-20.
- ) But for the remainder of our time today, let's ask and answer these two questions. 1) How can a Christian judge another Christian falsely? 2) What does it look like to speak evil about another Christian in judgment?
- ) The 6 points in your bulletin I am about to present to you come from the website [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org) and the points presented by Pastor Steven J. Cole.

- ) I will give an example for each point. In that example, I will be using a fictitious character that I have named Uncle Buck.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** *“You judge someone wrongly when you set up human standards, rather than holding to God’s Word as the standard.”*
- ) This point is foundational in judging. Any and all judgment between Christians must be based on the Word of God. You have every right to judge me when I act or speak contrary to sound Biblical principles. We cannot judge based on human standards.
- ) *“Uncle Buck told me that I keep on listening to and playing rock ‘n roll music, that I’m going to hell.”* ROMANS 14 speaks about issues called *“disputable matters.”* They are not Biblical issues but some Christians insist on making them Biblical issues.
- ) Uncle Buck has judged me by his human standards. He doesn’t care for rock music, so he believes I shouldn’t either. Folks, there is no Biblical mandate anywhere in this Book that says I cannot listen to and play rock ‘n roll music. Uncle Buck’s judgment was based on his own human standards and a disputable issue. Uncle Buck has judged wrongly.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** *“You judge someone wrongly when you do not first judge your own sin before trying to help him with his sin.”*
- ) **SLIDE 16.** We are all familiar with this one. MATT 7:5. Jesus never tells us here not to judge our brother or not to remove the plank out of our sinning brother’s eye. He tells us to remove our spec (or plank) from our own eyes first before we do.
- ) *“Uncle Buck said I better not steal anything from Walmart when I go there. But his home office is full of pens and paper and notebooks and even a printer he took from his work. And he laughs about it and says they’ll never miss it. Well, clean your closet Uncle Buck before you try to clean mine.”*
- ) Uncle Buck has judged wrongly.

- ) **SLIDE 17.** “You judge someone wrongly when you **criticize** him out of jealousy, bitterness, selfish ambition, or some other sin, rather than seeking to build him in Christ.”
- ) “Uncle Buck is really upset that he didn’t get the position of church deacon and the only reason I got it was because I took the pastor out to lunch one time. Now Uncle Buck is telling everyone he knows that I bribed the pastor to get that position.”
- ) The Body of Believers is in the business of edifying each other—building each other up. Uncle Buck should be proud that I got the deacon’s position. But now we know that Uncle Buck’s motive for criticizing me was due to jealousy, selfish ambition, rivalry, pride, and maybe even hatred. Uncle Buck has judging wrongly.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** “You judge someone wrongly when you assume that you know all of the pertinent **facts** and **motives** behind the person’s words or actions.”
- ) “Uncle Buck is telling everyone that I bought that Corvette out of money I skimmed from the church treasury.”
- ) We are judging on shaky ground if we do not know all of the pertinent facts. Are we judging based on gossip? Are we judging based on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> hand information? Are we 100% sure the information we have is correct? Uncle Buck has judged wrongly because he did not have all the facts.
- ) **SLIDE 19.** “You judge someone wrongly when you share confidential or personal information with the **wrong** intent.”
- ) “Uncle Buck wanted everyone to know that Aunt Ethel was put in jail for writing bad checks. He knew I was a prayer warrior and I could pray for Aunt Ethel.”
- ) I have no need to know all this information. Uncle Buck just wanted to feel important because he knew what was going on. His real intent was to let everyone know that Aunt Ethel messed up big time and that he knew it.

- ) Uncle Buck has judged wrongly. I don't know about you, but my toes are really starting to hurt.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** *"You judge someone wrongly when out of a self-righteous spirit, you criticize or malign him over a minor or indifferent matter."*
- ) *"You know, Uncle Buck tells everyone that I spend too much money on lottery tickets. He says he prefers to give his money to the church."* Perhaps if I was not feeding and clothing my wife and children because of this practice, then it may be time for Uncle Buck to step in.
- ) In this example, Uncle Buck wanted everyone to understand how much better a steward he is of God's provisions than me. He prefers to give his money to the church and not to the lottery. But if I want to blow \$20 a week on lottery tickets, and it's not taking away from other important issues, then let me alone. It's my form of entertainment.
- ) Uncle Buck spends \$35 a week going to the movies at the Zeus Theater. And he has no chance to win anything. It's a minor issue but Uncle Buck has a self-righteous spirit and wanted to make himself look good. Uncle Buck has judged wrongly.
- ) So, with the help of Pastor Steven J. Cole, I have given you six ways that we can speak evil against our brothers and sisters in Christ in a very unbiblical manner. Some issues could even be slanderous. And as Christians, we cannot go that route.
- ) There is a Biblical way to judge others and we will get to that when we get to JAMES 5:19-20. For now, let's be careful what we say about the brethren, especially our motives for doing so. We don't want to be like Uncle Buck.

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