

The Book of James

James 4:11-17

We're continuing our study today in the book of James chapter 4. Let me encourage you to have your Bible open as we look at these verses. Now, last time we left off with verse 12, but I want to go back to verse 11. These two verses, I believe, go together, and I would look at these verses as saying to us, "Have respect for other Christians."

In verse 11 of James chapter 4, it says, *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*

In the first part of that verse, I believe what James is saying here, "Do not defame or do not slander each other. Don't bring reproach upon the name of the Lord." You see, by slandering each other, he seems to be saying, you slander God's Word. In one section of that verse, it says, *He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law...* or, in other words, the Word of God.

Well, we looked at the royal law that we saw in James 2:8. It says, *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.* Well, the royal law says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." In Luke 10:27, it says, *And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.* This is the Lord speaking. How can we improve upon what God says? We cannot. We must do His Word.

And notice also in that verse, "By questioning the law," he seems to be saying, "you are not

abiding by the law but are passing your own opinion of it." Notice there it says in the last part of verse 11, *But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.* In passing one's own opinion, we're getting away from the Word of God. We must continue to interpret the Word of God by the Word of God. The Bible teaches us in Proverbs 14:12... it says, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

We also see that found in Proverbs 16:25. When we start judging according to our own belief instead of using the Word of God to interpret the Word of God, then we are doing wrong. We need to let the Word of God speak. In other words, let the chips fall where they may, that we are not the ones to interpret that law according to what we want it to say.

In James 4:12, it says, *There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?* In other words, there's one lawgiver; it's the Lord Jesus Christ. Only God has the right to judge, according to verse 12 of James chapter 4.

In Matthew 10:28, it says, *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* When we're dealing with individuals in this life as Christians, and we as Christians dealing with other individuals, we should not deal with them as actually giving what we think is right, but we need to give the Word of God as God has stated. And we're not to judge someone according to what we think, but that person is to be judged according to what God says. He is the lawgiver. He is the One who is better equipped to

interpret what He says is the law. Really, that only makes good spiritual common sense.

Now let's look on. In verses 13-17, I believe that James is saying to us do not take for granted what God has promised. In verses 13-16, I see that these people, and people even today, boast about the future. In verse 13, it says, *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.*

Well, I believe what James is saying here is that we are not to be presumptuous concerning the future. We don't know what tomorrow holds with the exception of knowing that, if Jesus Christ comes back today or tomorrow, we will be with Him. We do know what the future holds for the Christian, that person who has accepted Jesus as Savior, and that future is a glorious home in Heaven with the Lord. And, of course, we will be here ruling with Him during the millennial kingdom, and I believe in the future, as well, beyond the millennial kingdom.

In James 4:14, it says, *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.* This is the reason that he's saying in verse 13, "Don't boast yourself, because you don't know what is going to happen tomorrow." The verse continues in verse 14: *For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* You can't predict or count on tomorrow, James says in the first part of that verse.

In Proverbs 27:1, it says, *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* Once again, James is going along with the Word of God. He's not telling us something new. He's simply reinforcing through the Word of God what God has already said in the Scriptures, Proverbs 27:1.

And he goes on, and I believe he's saying, "You do not know how long you will live," and that verse 14 of James chapter 4, in the second part of that verse, it says, *For what is your life?* You don't know how long you're going to live. Job lived perhaps 200 years and said in Job 7:7, *O remember that my life is wind...* In other words, it's just here and it's gone. He goes on to say, *Mine eye shall no more see good.*

In Psalm 90:9, it says, *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.* In other words, it's here today and gone tomorrow. James says, "What is your life? It's even a vapor." Your life is like a mist. It's here one moment and gone the next. And this should give us pause as human beings.

First of all, you need to make sure of tomorrow. And how do you do that? How do you make sure of tomorrow? Well, the way you make sure of tomorrow is by receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior. There is only one certainty in this life and that certainty is that, once you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, trusting Him to save you, to take you to Heaven, you can't save yourself, once you trust Him as your Savior, your life will continue on eternally. You have eternal life once you've trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. And that is the promise of the Lord.

What's your life? It's even a vapor. That's speaking of this human life. It's here today and gone tomorrow. But when you ask Jesus to come into your heart, that means that you are promised tomorrow, that you are promised an eternity with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And remember, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. You can have that eternal life today by asking Him to come into your heart and save you so that you can be with Him forever.

And as a Christian, if you're not sure of tomorrow, you need to get in the Word of God and understand that He saved you forever and that you do have eternal life. Now, once again, we don't have the promise of tomorrow concerning this physical body. This body can die today, but we have the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And you need to be rejoicing, Christian, today, because you have trusted Jesus and He has saved you and you are going to spend eternity with Him.

But notice what James says. *For what is your life?* That's this physical life. *It is even a vapour...* It's here for a little time and then it's gone. It's like that mist. It's here one moment and then it's gone. Have you ever gone through a fog? Have you ever been in the fog? Have you ever seen how that it lifts? It's here for a while and then it's gone. And that's the way our life is, this human life that we're now living.

Well, James 4:15 says, because of all this, because your life is a vapor, *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.* God is telling us, and James is telling us in the Word of God, "Do not plan ahead without God." He's not saying don't make plans. He's not saying, as a human being, we're not to make plans, but don't plan ahead without God. All through God's Word He points to the fact that He wants every person in this world to know His Son as Savior. And we're not to do anything apart from listening to God, and the way we listen to God, first of all, is do what His Word said, and that is, first of all, to receive Jesus as Savior, and then as a Christian, we are to live by the Word of God.

Well, notice James 4:16: *But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.* Once again, that's making plans without God. In other words, you're going to do this and do that. Don't make plans without God. Don't do things without consulting God first. He's saying, "At

present, you're bragging makes you happy." That's something that's not going to last. Happiness because of bragging is sin, according to verse 16. And once again, Proverbs 27:1 says that we're not to count on tomorrow. It says, *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* Don't count on tomorrow. We need to concern ourselves with today, and as we make plans, don't make plans without including God in those plans. Any plans we make apart from taking God into account or listening to Him is sin. Our bragging about anything we do or plan to do apart from God is sin.

In James 4:17, there is no excuse for sin. It says there, *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* You now know what are the right things to do. James is saying, "Therefore, you know what to do." And if you do not do what is right, you have personally sinned. It's a personal matter. It's not for the group. It's personal. It's you. And I would ask you today that, everything that you do, please take God into account. Listen to what James has said in this chapter.