


THE SINS OF SLANDER AND JUDGMENTALISM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS


JAMES 4:11-12


- 1 **Is it possible to slander someone without judging them?** Why or Why not?


- 2 **The mention of the word brother (s) 3 times in verse 11 indicates that James is addressing the sin of slander / judgmentalism as a problem within the family of faith.** Take a moment to reflect on the nature of the Christian family. Like your physical family, you share the same identity, the same bloodline, the same forgiveness, the same undeserved favor from the Lord. In what ways are you willing to express / demonstrate love to your physical family that you are not willing to extend to brothers and sisters within your spiritual family?

- 3 **In addition to the following phrases, in what ways do you think Christians try to mask the sin of slander and judgmentalism under the guise of spiritual concern for other believers?** How are the sins of slander and judgmentalism community killers?
 - *‘Now stop me if I’m wrong, but...*
 - *“Now, I don’t mean to be critical, but...*
 - *“Perhaps I shouldn’t say this about him or her, but...*
 - *“I really like so and so as a person but...*

- 4 **Why do you think brothers and sisters in Christ talk one another down?** Kent Hughes offers some insight as to why he thinks they do. Take a moment to consider each of these scenarios and write down which expressions of judgmentalism may be present in your life.
 -  *Seeking revenge over some slight (real or imagined)*

 -  *Self Righteousness - Because of our spirituality, or sensitivity we think it equips us to pull others from their pedestals and unmask their hypocrisy*


 -  *We feel the need to elevate self. We view others like the pharisee in Luke 18:11 who thanked God he wasn’t like other sinners or even like the tax collector.*


 -  *Empty Talk. Sometimes this talking down of others simply comes too much empty talk. People don’t have much to talk about, so they fuel the fires of conversation with the flesh of others.*

- 5 **In Psalm 101 David is giving a vow and profession of godliness.** He confesses that if he is going to live a blameless life he cannot engage in slanderous speech. He says in verse 5 “whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.” The phrase “ I will not endure” means to function as a ditch toward slanderous speech. How does this inform the way in which you interact with people who may engage in sinful speech? Do you initiate, participate, or derail the sins James is surfacing in our text?


6 **James Stulac writes that “the problem in most Christian contexts is not necessarily dealing with clear cut cases, but in finding fault with fellow believers in grayer areas.** He suggests three ways in which Christians are often too quick to criticize. Out of these three examples, which one (s) are you tempted to criticize? What additional areas are you tempted to judge or criticize your brothers or sisters?


 *The motives behind others' words or actions*


 *How others spend money*


 *How others are rearing their children*

7 **James exposes 3 faulty views that lay at the root of the sin of slander and judgmentalism.** (vs. 11b-12) A faulty view of the law, a faulty view of God, and a faulty view of self. Interact with the following passages, quotations and then answer the following question.

 *A faulty view of the law (Royal law of love)
Gal. 4:15 James 2:8, John 13:34-45
“You can’t keep the law and stand above it our outside of its authority.”*

 *A faulty view of God (Only Lawgiver, Only One who can save and destroy)
Deuteronomy 32:39; I Sam. 2:6; Matt. 10:28
“The God who could have justly condemned and destroyed you and your Christian brother and sister chose rather to save! So you are choosing to judge someone who God has chosen to save.”*

 *A faulty view of self. (Who are you to judge your neighbor?)
“The man who knows himself learns an increasing silence before other’s faults.”*

 *To what degree and in what ways does your view in these areas need to be adjusted in order to guard against the sin of judgmentalism?*

PRAYER REQUESTS
