

## **THE SIN OF SPEAKING EVIL** **(James 4:11-12)**

### **I. We have to think properly about our brethren.**

- A. Notice that he uses the words brethren and brother three times in the first couple of lines.
  - 1. When we speak evil of brethren we are lacking love towards our brethren.
  - 2. Numerous scriptures could be cited but the badge of discipleship is love towards one another.
- B. If a person is constantly talking evil, slandering, fellow Christians, this person's salvation has to be questioned.
  - 1. Not because we are judges as we'll notice.
  - 2. But because of the fruit being born out in this person's life.
- C. The words brethren indicate family and we would not talk this way about family that we love.
  - 1. These are people for whom Jesus died.
  - 2. They are our brothers and sisters
- D. Do we view them as children of God?
  - 1. If we do, we won't say anything that is defaming about them.
  - 2. Remember that defaming means untrue.
  - 3. It does not mean we won't confront sin, but it won't allow us to talk mindlessly about them.

### **II. We have to think properly about the law.**

- A. Since loving each other is a fulfillment of God's law, when we fail to love we violate God's law.
- B. Therefore, when you slander a brother, you slander the law that forbids you to do that.
- C. This, in a nutshell, means you disregard God's law.
- D. What is law?
  - 1. It is basically a code that details all the factors of love.
  - 2. We don't know how to properly love without parameters and the law sets those parameters.
- E. Do you remember what Jesus said the law and prophets hang on...(Matthew 22:37)?
  - 1. Why?
  - 2. Because all law is, is a revealing of love and all the prophets did was apply the law and that's the issue here.
- F. James is saying if you slander your brother that's not love and if it's not love then you've broken the law.
- G. God gave His law in order to regulate and reveal how to love Him and our fellow man and when we fail to love by slandering we have broken God's law and shown that we disregard it.
  - 1. We are saying we are superior to God's law.
  - 2. This is what sin is - us saying we are greater than God and know more than God and God's law is not worthy of our attention.

- H. Notice the end of verse 11 - when we slander others, we make ourselves judges - we've climbed up on the bench and took over.
    - 1. We've rejected our position as being under authority.
    - 2. We've taken a position above the law.
  - I. Do any of us really want to take that position against God?
- III. We have to think properly about God.**
- A. There is "one lawgiver" - who we know is God.
    - 1. Do you know what this means?
    - 2. There is no room for us on the bench.
  - B. If you think about it, all sin, including slander, is an attempt at deicide.
    - 1. Deicide is the killing of God.
    - 2. We are saying I want God dead and for me to be in control whenever we sin.
  - C. This is why David said "against thee and thee only have I sinned."
  - D. This is why Joseph wouldn't commit that sin against God.
  - E. This is why sin is so serious and we must think properly about it.
  - F. The sense of the Greek is that only one is lawgiver and judge.
    - 1. He is both law-giver and law-applier.
    - 2. God is the one who will judge men by His law.
  - G. God gave the law and applies the law.
    - 1. He has the power to deliver from its penalty - to save.
    - 2. He has the power to exact the penalty - to destroy.
  - H. There is one and only one lawgiver and we can never truly take His place no matter how hard we may try.
  - I. Sin attempts to displace God and that is utter folly.
  - J. Satan, much more powerful than we, tried and failed.
- IV. We have to think properly about ourselves.**
- A. James asks, who art thou that judgest another?
    - 1. We would say, "Who do you think you are?"
    - 2. Or, "Who died and made you judge?"
  - B. We've got to remember who we are.
  - C. We are humble servants of God who should never dare speak evil of a fellow citizen of the kingdom of heaven.
  - D. An old preacher said of a friend, "He could find the manure pile in any meadow."
    - 1. Are we constantly looking for the bad?
    - 2. Are we saying things about others that aren't true to bolster ourselves and make us feel better about ourselves?
  - E. We would not want someone speaking evil, slandering, us and we should never do that to someone else.

From material by John MacArthur