

James 4:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

Do not speak evil (katalaleite, καταλαλεῖτε) of one another. He who speaks against a brother judges (krineis, κρίνεις) the law and becomes a judge rather than a doer. Slander usurps God's role and despises His royal law of love.

Reformed ethics emphasize mutual edification. James insists that tongues, previously addressed, must not tear down the body under guise of discernment.

Historical Context

Diaspora believers, marginalized, may have turned frustrations inward through slander. James addresses this, echoing Leviticus 19:16. Paul's warnings against biting and devouring (Galatians 5:15) parallel this call.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Where might you be judging the law by slandering others?
2. How can you address concerns without gossip?
3. Who needs to hear words of encouragement instead of critique?

Interlinear Text

Μὴ καταλαλεῖ ἀλλήλων ἀδελφὸν ὁ καταλαλεῖ
not He that speaketh evil one of another brethren G3588 He that speaketh evil
G3361 G2635 G240 G80 G2635

ἀδελφὸν καὶ κρίνεις τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καταλαλεῖ
brethren and judgeth G3588 brethren G846 He that speaketh evil
G80 G2532 G2919 G80 G2635

νόμου καὶ κρίνεις νόμου εἰ δὲ νόμου κρίνεις οὐκ
of the law and judgeth of the law if but of the law judgeth not
G3551 G2532 G2919 G3551 G1487 G1161 G3551 G2919 G3756

εἰ ποιητὴς νόμου ἀλλὰ κριτής
thou art a doer of the law but a judge
G1488 G4163 G3551 G235 G2923

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:1 (Evil): Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

Romans 2:1 (Judgment): Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

James 5:9 (Judgment): Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Psalms 140:11 (Evil): Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

Luke 6:37 (Judgment): Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

1 Corinthians 4:5 (Judgment): Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Ephesians 4:31 (Judgment): Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

2 Corinthians 12:20 (Judgment): For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

2 Timothy 3:3 (Parallel theme): Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

1 Timothy 3:11 (Parallel theme): Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.