

James 4:11-12

A Strong Warning against Defaming Others

If you have ever been tempted to ridicule, criticize, or verbally attack someone, these verses should get your attention.

James addresses a particular problem involving our speech that is a tremendous insult to God.

> James says speaking against or judging someone is the same as speaking against or judging God's Law (v. 11a)? What point is James making? God's law is the authority, not us. If we cast judgment on someone, we are basically saying we are the Law.

> What does [verse 11b](#) say our focus should be on? Obeying/keeping God's law, rather than trying to play the role of the judge.

> For those who try to play the role of the judge, what does James say about that (v. 12a)? There's only one Judge (God).

> What does [verse 12b](#) teach about humility? It is not our place to judge, focus on fulfilling your role and let God fulfill His.

Application

God is the Judge of people's actions, we are not. It is not our role to tear people down when they fail to meet our approval. Keep in mind, this passage does not forbid exposing sin in the life of fellow believers. God tells us He can use that for good when done with the right attitude ([John 7:24](#); [James 5:20](#); [Eph. 5:11](#)). However, when our speech is degrading, it accomplishes no good. Before confronting someone, consider:

- Are you exposing sin with good intentions and a genuine concern for the person's walk with God?
- Or, are you criticizing simply to tear the person down and bring them embarrassment and humiliation?

Only God knows the heart and motive behind people's actions, so only He can judge fairly. Let Him be the Judge!