

I. Introduction: James has a lot to say about the tongue. 1:26 3:1-12 4:11-12 Gal. 5:15

A. Review: Why do we have quarrels and conflicts? 4:1ff

1. You want something – *a legitimate desire, when it becomes a ruling desire (“I must have”) becomes a sinful (idolatrous) desire.*
2. When you don’t get what you want you attack the other person. 4:2,11
3. By so doing, you are playing God. 4:12

B. When is your anger is righteous? (from Robert Jones, Uprooting Anger). 1:19-20

Ps. 119:53 Mark 3:5 10:14 John 2:13ff 1 Sam. 11:1ff

1. Has actual sin taken place?
2. Are you more concerned for God’s kingdom, rights and glory than for your own?
3. Is your anger expressed in a righteous way?

II. Do not tear each other down verbally. 4:11a

A. How do we speak against each other?

1. Hurtful speech– angry words, insults, name calling, harsh criticism, cruel jokes, cutting sarcasm. Mt. 5:22 Ps. 52:2-4 Co. 3:8 Eph. 4:29,31 Ga. 5:15 Pr. 12:18
2. Tearing others down when they are not present through slander and gossip. Leviticus 19:16 Ps. 15:3a 50:20 101:5 Rom. 1:30 2 Cor. 12:20 1 Pe. 2:1 Num. 12:8 Pr. 22:1 6:16-19 26:18 Jer. 9:4 Co. 3:8 Eph. 4:31 Jer. 6:28
3. Jesus was slandered and maligned. Mt. 11:18-19 John 8:41 1 Pet. 2:21ff

B. Your sinful speech is destructive.

1. When you attack your brother verbally, you are doing the devil’s work. v. 7b John 8:44 Rev. 12:10 Gen. 3:5 Eph. 4:26-27
2. People are destroyed and friendships are ruined. Pr. 16:28 17:9 27:20 11:9
3. Churches are divided. 4:1-2 2 Tim. 2:16-17 1 Cor. 5:11
4. God judges evil speech. Mt. 12:36-37 Ps. 52:1-5 Pr. 10:31

C. Don’t listen to or repeat speech which tears others down. Pr. 20:19 26:20 17:20

D. Why do we speak against each other? Mt. 15:19-20 12:33-34 Pr. 15:2,28 18:8

E. How can we test our speech?

1. Is it certainly and completely true?
2. Should love cover, rather than expose, this sin? 1 Peter. 4:8 Gen. 9:22
3. Does love compel me to say something? 5:19-20 Pr. 11:13 17:19 Ga. 6:1
4. Will what I have to say build up or tear down? Eph. 4:29 Phil. 4:8-9

III. Do not wrongfully judge one other. 4:11b

A. James is not saying that we eliminate all discernment (judgment). Jo. 7:24 1 Co. 6:2

1. Civil government is to judge evildoers on God’s behalf. Rom. 13:1ff 1 Pe. 2:14
2. The church must discipline those who are guilty of error or immorality. 1 Cor. 5:3,11-13 6:1ff 2 Th. 3:14-15 Phil. 3:2 Gal. 1:8-9 Acts 20:29ff 1 John 4:1 2 John 1:10 Titus 3:10 Deut. 13:1ff 18:22 1 Tim. 6:3-5
3. We must sometimes exercise discernment in relationships. Pr. 20:19 22:24
4. We are responsible to admonish and correct each other. 5:19-20 Lev. 19:17 Mt. 7:5b 18:15-17 Gal. 6:1-2 Rom. 15:14

- B. What kind of judgment is forbidden? Luke 6:37-42**
1. Don't judge others while refusing to deal with your own sin. Mt. 7:2-5 18:21ff
 2. Don't Rashly judge others without knowing all of the facts. Pr. 18:13,15,17
1 Sa. 1:12ff Jo. 7:24
 3. Don't unmercifully judge others by failing to assume the best. 1 Co. 13:7 Mt. 7:12
 4. Don't judge the unseen motives of others. Mt. 7:12 1 Co. 4:5 13:7 1 Sa. 17:28
 5. Don't judge others in matters of conscience. Romans 14:3-5 Col. 2:16ff
 6. Don't judge others for their opinions on non-primary doctrine. Ro. 14:17
 7. Don't harshly judge others for their minor faults. 1 Pet. 4:8 Titus 3:9
 8. Don't judge by writing people off when they let you down.

- C. Why do we judge others?**
1. We judge and punish others when we don't get what we want. 4:1-2
 2. Our judgment of others is often motivated by pride. 4:6,10 Lu. 18:9ff Mt. 7:1ff
 3. We judge others because we are self righteous and lack grace, having forgotten God's mercy to us. Mt. 18:21ff Luke 9:54 Eph. 4:32
 4. Judgmental people are often jealous and insecure. 4:2
 5. Some have a critical spirit.

- D. How should we correct each other? Gal. 6:1 Lev. 19:17 Mt. 7:5**

IV. You are guilty of playing God. v. 11c-12

- A. You usurp God's office as Lawgiver. v. 11c-12a Isa. 33:22**
1. By tearing others down with your speech, you violate the (royal) law (of love).
4:11c 1:25 2:8 Lev. 19:16-18 Ro. 13:8-10 Gal. 5:14
 2. God is the perfect Lawgiver. He makes the rules.
- B. You usurp God's office as Judge. v. 12b Isa. 33:22**
1. Even when others wrong you, you are not called to stand in God's place to condemn them. Gen. 49:19 Rom. 12:17-21
 2. God is a perfect Judge – all-knowing and just. Pr. 15:11 1 Sam. 16:7 1 Cor. 4:5
 3. God is able both to destroy and to save. 5:7ff Dt. 32:39 Mt. 10:28 1:21 1 Sa. 2:6
2 Th. 1:9 Mt. 10:28 1 Cor. 1:18 Rom. 1:16 Luke 19:10 Heb. 7:25 Isa. 33:22
- C. Who are you to judge your neighbor? v. 12c Mt. 7:1-2 12:36-37 Ro. 2:1-3**

V. Concluding applications: The gospel gives us a renewed heart which results in transformed speech. 1:19,21 Eph. 4:22-24,25,29 Col. 4:6 Psalm 19:14

Discussion questions

1. Why do we have conflict?
2. What is righteous anger?
3. In what ways do Christians speak against each other?
4. What harm is caused by such speech?
5. How can we test our speech before we open our mouths?
6. What should you do if someone tries to gossip in your presence?
7. In what situations is it necessary and right to exercise judgment?
8. What kinds of judgment are forbidden?
9. What is the proper way to bring correction?
10. Why is it wrong for us to speak against and judge one another?
11. How does the gospel save us from these sins?