

Why Slander is a Serious Sin

James 4:11-12

James 4:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Introduction

I think we would all agree that sin is a serious thing. And it is clear from the Bible that God takes sin very seriously. It only took one act of disobedience to one command to bring death to all mankind and to curse the entire universe for millennia. And in order for sin to be forgiven and removed, Jesus had to take the full fury of the wrath of the Just Judge of Heaven in order to keep just one of us out of Hell. So yes, sin is a very serious matter to God. Nothing to be winked at or considered trivial.

However, I also am sure that we often think that certain sins are not as serious as others. There is a tendency of us to think of sin or sins like this. We may say something a little off color in a joke and not think it that bad or we may get upset with the driver in front of us and brush it off as not that serious. Or we intentionally decide to go over the speed limit or complain about the speed limit and not give it much thought about it being a sin. But that is the wrong way to think about sin or that certain sins are not as serious as others. Remember, It took Jesus being slaughtered on the cross to pay for the sin of speeding, or complaining or that off color joke. So they might not be so serious to us, but they are very serious to God. Very serious.

But the right way of thinking that certain sins are not as serious is by the punishment they receive. Our God is a just God, a Righteous judge. The scales of justice in His court room are equal. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. You take a life, you loose your life. You steal from someone, you pay it back. You don't loose your life in capital punishment for stealing some grain from you neighbor. NO with God there are equal weights and equal measures.

With that said, there are certain sins that are more serious to God and can receive a more severe punishment.

One of those sins is the sin of the tongue. The tongue can destroy a person, discourage a person, defame a person, divide a church, ravage a family, spread lies, misrepresent the truth, lead astray, speak false doctrine, blaspheme God, deny Christ, so discord among brothers, gossip, malign and slander.

James correctly said that the tongue is set on fire from Hell. It is the devil's play ground. More counseling is done and reconciliation needed because of the destructive work of the tongue than any other things.

Sins of the tongue are very serious.....

Proverbs 6 states that of the 7 sins God hates, 3 address the tongue.

A lying tongue.

A false witness *who* speaks lies,

And one who sows discord among brethren.

Slander is particularly evil. It can and often includes all three of the sins in Proverbs 6. But slander rises to a new level. It doesn't have to lie to achieve its

goal all the time. It can use truth to destroy a man's reputation, or destroy in good name. Especially in the context of the church and among the brethren.

It can take a confessed, repented of and forgiven sin that a brother committed and spread it around to cause harm.

It can take a true matter that was supposed to be kept private and turn it into a knife to hurt the person who shared it with you.

It can take a struggle a sister is dealing with and it be spread among those who should never know and destroy that sister.

Oh, brothers and sisters, Slander is serious. It is seditious, and satanic.

1 Corinthians 5:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹ I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I have written to you not to keep

company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a **reviler**, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

. 13.....Therefore “*put away from yourselves the evil person.*”

v. 11 **reviler**—

λοῖδορος, ου m: (derivative of λοιδορέω ‘to slander,’ 33.393) one who engages in slandering—
‘slanderer

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 433). United Bible Societies.

slanderer n. — one who attacks the reputation of another by slander or libel.

This word notes more of the abusive nature and insidious nature of Slander.

It is used in another place,

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor

homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor **revilers**, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

It goes with out saying by reading these two passages that, God takes slander very very serious.

Although it is one of the most hated sins by God and one of the most serious sins. Yet christians participate in it nearly every day. Our culture is saturated with it. The tabloids are built on it. The news media could not exist without it. No one would watch it. YouTube and Cable TV has entire channels dedicated to it. It has become a common thread woven thru the fabric of our society.

Twenty-five years ago Neil Postman observed that television had become an American “necessity” and lamented its effects on society. He correctly described the culture of the 1980s as one that was amusing itself to death. If he were alive today, Postman would be astonished at how quickly Twitter, Facebook, and other forms of social media have gripped our society. His earlier criticisms raise an interesting question about these current trends: If TV

put our culture in the casket, has social media nailed the coffin shut?

Almost overnight, the budding world of social media has revolutionized the way our culture communicates. Even our vocabulary has been affected. Suddenly, people are “tagging” each other, “tweeting” about themselves, and “liking” everything they see. For the first time, it’s possible to have “friends” you’ve never even met. Those conversant in the language of social media rarely use complete sentences or even complete words (since they are limited to 140 characters). All the while, words like “screenager,” “vlog,” and “cyberslacking,” are finding their way into dictionaries like Oxford and Webster’s. It’s funny to consider that, not too long ago, surfing was just a water sport and a yahoo was a crazy person. But not anymore.

Social media is also changing the way people spend their time. Recent statistics from Nielson indicate that Americans spend 906 million hours per month using social media.¹ Twitter has over 100 million users. YouTube serves more than two billion videos a day. And Facebook reports that, worldwide, its 500 million active users spend a combined 700 billion minutes on the site each month. That’s roughly 24

hours per person, which is a lot of time to spend checking status updates and changing profile pictures.²

On the one hand, social networking websites provide numerous benefits and opportunities.

But social networking can also be abused. When it consists of nothing more than random babblings and personal monologues, it can become self-centered, unrestrained and narcissistic. When it consumes our lives, it can be addictive and controlling. Used unwisely, it is filled with potential pitfalls and temptations.

One of the many, but yet prominent sins in Social media is Slander. It is slam full of it.

The book of Proverbs tells us that, “He who spreads slander is a fool. When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:18b-19). A maxim for all of life, that statement certainly applies to social media.

Those who spread slander and gossip online can now find themselves in court.⁸ Some might be sued.⁹ Others simply fired from their jobs.¹⁰

But even if such potential consequences did not exist, Christians answer to a higher court. And God has made it clear what He thinks about gossip: “He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do no associate with a gossip” (Proverbs 20:19).

A study in the *New York Daily News* found that 80% of normal conversations consist of gossip.¹¹ Those numbers seem to be consistent with online interactions, where talking about other people is almost as popular as talking about oneself. <https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B101110/~>

But as much as it might be expected for so many people on social media platforms to slander other people. I can't say that I have found it much different in the Church. The larger the church the more slander you have, the more gossip and backbiting. The sins of the tongue dominate.

Yet as we have noted that last time, the sins of the tongue are particularly egregious in the sight of God.

Slander is particularly evil. And the Book of James makes note of that.....with pungency

Slander occurs whenever someone says something ...about someone else that results, intentionally or unintentionally, in damaging that someone else's reputation. And when it occurs, it becomes a divisive, discouraging, and confusing weight that often affects numerous people — sometimes many, many people.<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lay-aside-the-weight-of-slander>

It can be anything that is shared about a brother or sister to someone else that is true or false with the intent or the result of changing the perception of that person in a negative or evil way

To help us understand more of the nature and cause of slander lets look at,

Matthew 18:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

This verse **ranks at the very top** of how to stop slander. In fact, it is the solution to most of the problems in relationships, and church division.

If this is not obeyed first, slander will begin if you share it with anyone else.

First, If your brother sins.

Note that it has to be a sin. Not your definition of sin.... God’s

Second, If your brother sins against you.

Note the sin needs to be **done to you.**

But we need to clarify.

There are some sins that would not be wise to go back to the person who sinned against them.

Like, physical abuse. If a wife is being physically abused, she needs alert the church and the authorities. Do not go back into that potentially harmful environment. The same for a child.

Also there are sins that are committed not personally against a brother, but in a wider sense toward the body of Christ.

Like, a man gets drunk and another brother sees that.

or a professed believer has road rage and gets very angry and a brother is witness to it.

This would require that you go to that brother and **him alone first**, to call him to repentance, and to restore that brother.

But for now, Specifically being addressed here are sins done directly to a person who is a believer.

Let's keep it to the particular sin of Slander in the passage of James

How to start slander.

Slander starts when I have had something done to me, or believe something is done wrong to me, and instead of going to the person that did it to me, I share it with someone else.

So here is an easy way to know if you are slandering your brother or sister.

Someone did something to you that is sinful and instead of going to them, you told someone else.

That someone else could be, a friend, a associate at work, your husband or wife, a brother or sister, and pastor, elder or deacon.

It can be in the form of concern for them, for the church, for the person sinned against.

It can be as statement, an email, a text, a prayer request.

How to Stop Slander or Assist slander— —give it legs, help it spread.

A person has been sinned against and instead of going to the person who sinned against them to reconcile the relationship, they share it with someone else.

Slander has happened. It has begun.

Now, It can be stopped at this point or it can be fueled and set on fire.

It can be Stopped by— telling the person who was sinned against, that is is not right for you to be sharing this with me, You need to go to that person and talk to them and reconcile the issue with them and them alone, and tell no one else.

If this happens, the sin of slander has been stopped in its tracks, corrected and brought back into obedience to Matthew 18:15.

It can be Spread by- first listening to the person who has been sinned against, and not stopping them and correcting their path but instead of telling them to go back to the one who sinned against them, you share it with others,

This can be done out of care, concern, prayer request or an attempt to correct that brother or sister.

This is the # 1 reasons we have problems in relationships, families and churches.

Its not stopped. It's Spread.

The only reason any other person should be brought into the problem between 2 people is because the one who was sinned against, has gone personally and privately to that person alone and sought to reconciled the relationship and to see the brother who sinned against them to repent, but instead, he does not repent, and then and only then, you bring in 2 more to witness the 2nd step to call that brother back from his sin.

So here it is very simple

If you are listening to a brother or sister tell you about the sin or the perceived wrong that was done to them by another person, and you do not stop it in its tracks, you are receiving slander and participating in it.

If you tell anyone else, you have slandered that brother

You are acting like the devil!!

So James wants us to understand the Seriousness of the Sin of Slander and to stop the Slander!

The Command

The Concern

I. The Command

11 Do not speak evil of one another,

Katalaleō (**speak against**) appears only here and in 1 Peter 2:12 and 3:16. Along with the related nouns *katalalia* (“slander”; 2 Cor. 12:20; 1 Pet. 2:1) and *katalalous* (“slanderers”; Rom. 1:30), it refers to mindless, thoughtless, careless, critical, derogatory, untrue speech directed against others.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 221). Moody Press.

Apparently the reference is to the major way in which their “fights and quarrels” (v. 1) expressed themselves. The compound verb literally means to “speak down on” (compare the common expression “running each other down”) and is broader than “slander” in the NIV rendering. Basically meaning to “speak evil of,” Wolff notes that such evil speaking “includes (1) willful false accusations, (2) exaggerations of faults that are real, (3) needless repetition of real faults, (4) slander.”

The Greek word literally means “speak against” another. It might either mean to speak against someone *truly* or to speak evil *falsely*. To gossip is to take a true story where it should not go. To slander is to create and spread false stories. Both gossip and slander are sins and cause real harm.

Dorioni, D. M. (2007). [James](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Dorioni, Eds.; p. 156). P&R Publishing.

Numbers 21:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. ⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.”

(Notice, it does not say they spoke to God and Moses. NO, the intent of the text is that they spoke to one another about God and Moses... There is a maligning of the motive and goal of Moses and God. A misrepresentation of the truth. A judgment of the reputation of Moses and God. An attack on the character of Moses and God. A defaming, blasphemy and accusatory spirit)

⁶ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

1 Peter 2:12 (NKJV)

¹² having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.
Matthew 5:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

I. The Command

II. The Concern

The Concern comes in James’ statements on just how serious it is to slander. He makes his concern clear by an escalation of seriousness. Moving from the brothers, to the law, and then to God.

1. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand who you are slandering.

11 Do not speak evil of one another, **brethren**. He who speaks evil of **a brother** and judges his **brother**, speaks evil of the law and judges the law....

This is the Bride of Christ you are slandering. This is one for whom Christ died that you are maligning and ruining the reputation of.

2. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand what you are slandering.

¹¹ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

If you slander you,

speak evil of the law and judge the law

This is true of every sin. But slander is particularly evil in that it sets your words against the Words of God. It declares your statements about the character of a person as superior to the Law of God.

___ Quarrels over most issues usually end up including personal attacks and judgmental attitudes.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 198). Eerdmans; Apollos.

v 11 He who speaks evil of a brother **and** judges his brother, speaks evil of the law **and** judges the law

“Anyone who speaks” (*ho katalalōn*), an articular present participle, denotes that his derogatory speech is characteristic or habitual. It “does not refer to an occasional slip of the tongue, but to habitual slipping, to constant criticizing and judging.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

The **conjunction “or”** may be disjunctive to denote a separate and distinct activity, but it is better to take it as conjunctive to denote that it is the same activity viewed from a different angle.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

This is in accord with the fact that both participles are under the government of one article. With “judges” the thought shifts from his malicious activity against a brother to his condemnation of “his brother.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

Because of the slander and through the means of slander, you move from a wrongful representation of a brother to a condemnation of that brother. You have determined that he is evil or has done some evil and treat him as such.

When you slander/judge a person, you are claiming “they have failed to do something they should have done, or they are doing something they shouldn’t do.” (Allister Begg). And this is usually without all the facts, jumping to judgement, a misrepresentation of the truth.

Allister Begg,

Slander and passing judgment are almost inseparable sins: when we speak against our brother, we inevitably judge him.

“Speaks against the law and judges it” (*katalalei nomou kai krinei nomon*, “speaks against [the] law and judges [the] law”) unveils the deep meaning of the reprehensible practice. James might have condemned it as a revelation of

personal lovelessness; instead, he related it to “the law” and, beyond that, to God. Both occurrences of “the law” are without the article here, thus keeping the thought purely qualitative.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

the law governing the Christian life that James has already spoken of as “the perfect law, the law of liberty” (1:25) and “the royal law,” that is, the law of Christian love (2:8). Now he thinks of it simply as having the force of “law” for believers. Its characteristic quality is that they must love their neighbor as themselves

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the Lord.

Matthew 22:36–40 (NKJV)

³⁶ “Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?”

³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*’³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second is like it: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Romans 13:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there *is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Galatians 5:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Slander is not love and it is not the fulfillment of the law. Rather it is the antithesis of Love and the total disregarding of the law. It is a setting oneself above the law. You and your evaluation become the standard by which someone is judged. You become a law unto your self.

When you willfully and wrongfully represent or misrepresent a brother to another person in slander, you are in effect saying, “ God your law does not matter. I can do what I want to do, say what I want to say. Determine what I want to determine. Judge what I want to judge. Condemn what I want to condemn.

“All law demands obedience and deliberate transgression says in effect that the law is bad, too strict perhaps, and that our standard is superior.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

His practice as a Christian suggests that presumably he claims to be acting according to higher principles. “However high and orthodox our view of God’s law might be,” Moo remarks, “a failure actually to do it

says to the world that we do not *in fact* put much
(stock in it)me

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

The vicious speaking against a brother is a violation
of this law of love

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

v.11c But if you judge the law,
you are not a doer of the law but
a judge.

“When you judge” (*ei*, “if” with the indicative)
introduces a **first class conditional** construction
that assumes the condition is true to fact. But in now
using the second person singular verb, “you,” James
confronts his readers individually. He calls upon the
guilty readers individually to judge themselves in
light of the statement being made.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

In judging the law as not worthy to be obeyed. You
set yourself as superior to the law and as a judge
with greater and superior law to the Law of Love by
God.

In thus setting himself above the law, he usurps the office of the judge whose function is to determine whether a man's actions come under the authority of a certain law. In effect, he proposes that he is qualified to enact a better law. He is usurping the prerogatives of the divine Lawgiver.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

1 Corinthians 4:1–5 (NKJV)

4 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Alister Begg,

When we are tempted to pass judgment, an

honest look at our own sinfulness should cause us to pause. The more we know our own hearts, the more gracious we become towards others.

Matthew 7:1–5 (NKJV)

7 “Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

John 7:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

Slander is a self determined, independent judgement of the truth based on true or false and

incomplete information or a self determined, independent judgement based on lies.

It is a self-assertive, setting oneself up as judge and jury based on a law that you believe better represents the Law of God. You become the law. The standard by which someone is condemned.

v.11c But if you judge the law,
you are not a doer of the law but
a judge.

 You are not the one anymore doing the law, trying to live the law, but rather, You have ascended to the Bench, placed on your black rope, taken the gavel in your hands and are condemning others based on your interpretation of the law. Only one knows all the truth and that is God, but you have ascended to a place that you believe you know the truth and that you know the motives of that heart, and can access them with 100% accuracy, so that you can't pronounce a correct sentence or judgment.

I. The Command

II. The Concern

1. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand who you are slandering.

2. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand what you are slandering.

3. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand Sovereign you are slandering.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Let such arrogance face the solemn reality: God alone is the ultimate source of all law and authority

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

God not only authored the Law; He also administrates the Law. He serves as both the executive and judicial branches of the divine government. God is King; He institutes and declares

His Law. God is Judge; He upholds and enforces His Law

Blue, J. R. (1985). [James](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 831). Victor Books.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is
able to save and to destroy. Who
 are you to judge another?

This unique and sovereign God is further identified as “the one who is able to save and destroy.” “The one who is **able**” (*ho dunamenos*), an articular present participle, stands in apposition to “One” as further establishing His uniqueness. He unfailingly possesses the ability to carry out His purposes, thus confirming His exclusive prerogatives as “Lawgiver and Judge.” As Lawgiver He declares His will for His creatures, and as Judge He upholds and enforces His revealed will.

“To save and destroy” summarizes God’s exercises of His sovereign power. The two aorist infinitives indicate that God’s decisions are effectively executed in any given situation. This ability belongs to God alone. The statement is general, and the two activities need not be limited as to their nature or time. They have a present

application, but the eschatological verdict of God as Judge seems primarily in view.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 244). BMH Books.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is
able to save and to destroy. Who
 are you to judge another

“But” sharpens the contrast between the sovereign God and this foolish individual who is usurping God’s right as the Judge. The use of the emphatic personal pronoun (*su*) underlines the contrast and increases the note of scorn. Burdick well remarks that James’s shattering bluntness is not intended “to rule out civil courts and judges. Instead, it is to root out the harsh, unkind, critical spirit that continually finds fault with others.”

“You to judge” (*ho krinōn*), an articular present participle standing in apposition to the emphatic pronoun, characterizes this individual as one who makes it his business to pass censorious judgment upon his “neighbor,” the one next to him. “Your neighbor” seems clearly intended to recall the law of love cited in 2:8, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 244). BMH Books.

For when we judge and condemn others, we appoint ourselves to a position over them. But what gives us the right to promote ourselves to that rank? Indeed, to take the post of judge is to usurp a role that belongs to God himself

Dorioni, D. M. (2007). [James](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Dorioni, Eds.; p. 154). P&R Publishing.

If we damage a person's reputation unjustly, we are stealing their good name; we are vandalizing their character. This causes very real, sometimes long-lasting damage to people, because restoring a devalued name is very difficult. Who knows what love, joy, counsel, comfort, and opportunities we take from people if we care for their name carelessly? <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lay-aside-the-weight-of-slander>

When someone slanders another to us, we must remember that we are not mainly fighting flesh and blood, but spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12).

Satan knows that slander deadens and splits churches, poisons friendships, and fractures families. He knows slander quenches the Holy Spirit,

kills love, short-circuits spiritual renewal, undermines trust, and sucks the courage out of the saints.

So our goal, particularly in the context of the church, is to help each other shed demonic weights and avoid satanic stumbling blocks.

So how do we do this?

The best way is to become people who are not safe to slander around. We must ask each other questions like:

- Have you shared your concern with this person directly? I'd be willing to go with you to talk to him.
- Just to be clear, is this information I should know? Do you want me to help you pursue reconciliation?
- Are you doing everything you possibly can to put away "all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander?" (Ephesians 4:31)
- How can I help you guard this person's reputation like a treasure? (Proverbs 22:1)

In other words, friends don't let friends slander. Friends don't let friends act like God-haters (Romans 1:30). The more we love people, the more we hate

slander, because a slanderer hates his victims (Proverbs 26:28).

Let us remember that we are stewards of the treasure of each other's good names. Let us resolve to avoid sharing information that is unnecessarily damaging to another person's reputation and to repent to everyone affected if we do. Let us seek to silence the sin nature slanderer within and graciously give and receive others' help when one of us slips, perhaps unaware, into slander. Let us do damage to Satan's forces by speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lay-aside-the-weight-of-slander>

In James 4

James 4:6 (NKJV)

*“God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.”*

James 4:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

When we are honest with ourselves and the sin of our hearts and how wretched they are and how justifiably we ought to find ourselves in dock. We will be less prone to assume a position on the bench. But if we are deceitful in our own hearts, and lie about our position with God, and refuse to humble ourselves before him, then in exalting ourselves and defaming others, we find ourselves right in the heart of this passage.

“The knowledge of our own failings, makes us more and more hesitant about expressing any form of criticism of others. The man who knows himself, learns an increasing silence before other people’s faults” A. Begg

Remember what I read earlier, how the people of Israel, slandered Moses and God and how God killed many of them through the bite of the serpents. Well, that is not the end.

Numbers 21:7–9 (NKJV)

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take

away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

