

The book of James

4:11-17

Here we are in the book of James as we continue learning about arguments and judging others in chapter 4.

✚ **James 4:11-12** *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. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?*

Let's also look at these verses in the NLT.

✚ **James 4:11-12 (NLT)** *Don't speak evil against each other, my dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize each other and condemn each other, then you are criticizing and condemning God's law. But you are not a judge who can decide whether the law is right or wrong. Your job is to obey it. God alone, who made the law, can rightly judge among us. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to condemn your neighbor?*

Reading these verses makes you stop and think for a minute about the person you may be arguing with or had an argument with.

It seems when we are arguing with someone, we want to get others involved, and on our side. So what do we do? We start saying all kinds of bad things about him or her. We tell others about the argument and only tell our side of the story.

This reminds me of an argument between two women in the bible and how it was handled.

† **1 Kings 3:16-28** *Now two women who were harlots came to the king, and stood before him. And one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we were together; no one was with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne." Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." And the first woman said, "No! But the dead one is your son, and the living one is my son." Thus they spoke before the king. And the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son, who lives, and your son is the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son is the dead one, and my son is the living one.' " Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they*

brought a sword before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other." Then the woman whose son was living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!" But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him." So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother." And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

So how does this apply to this week's study?

If you read it carefully, you will notice when someone is wrong, they don't care who they hurt, and such was the case of the second woman. She didn't care if the child died, because her child was dead anyway and she wanted someone else, who was apparently a friend, to hurt also.

But the first woman cared more about others than herself, because she was willing to give up her child so it would live.

What about you, are you willing to have others hurt to resolve an argument?

Do you care about how much you want to be right or not have to admit you're wrong that you will accept others being hurt also?

Maybe you are the one who is right. Are you willing to give in so others won't be hurt, or does your pride hinder you from doing this?

Whether you are right or wrong, you shouldn't get others involved nor say bad things about someone else.

✎ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren.

By speaking bad or evil things about someone we are judging and condemning them; and only God can judge and condemn.

✎ 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. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy

Does this mean that judges in a court are wrong or that we don't have to listen to them?

No, God appoints judges as well as other officials to help keep the law of the land.

† Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

James asks one final question before we go on.

✧ *Who are you to judge another?*

One thing to always remember, the person you are angry or upset with, Jesus died for. And if they ask for Jesus' forgiveness, He will forgive him or her.

We pray and sing songs that say, "Make me more like you Jesus." But when you ask this do you realize that to be more like Jesus is to be forgiving?

The first things Jesus said when He was being crucified was **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."**

† **Luke 23:32-38** *There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself." And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

It is a good thing to desire and to pray to be more like Jesus, why not start today by asking God **"Father, forgive them"**. Then go and do likewise!

✧ **James 4:13-17** *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

Reading this you may wonder, "Is it wrong to make plans for the future? Is it wrong for me to buy that house or car? What about my job, my family, my friends, do I not make plans for their future?"

I do not believe James is saying that it's wrong to make plans for the future.

Someday, God willing, I would like to buy a home. By God's grace I have future plans for this web site. I have plans for my children; I have plans for my retirement years.

It's not wrong to make plans for the future, but you shouldn't allow them to consume you.

Your plans may be to marry someday, have a house with children. You may plan to excel in your job. Maybe you have plans to be a missionary someday, or even a teacher of God's word. Maybe God has laid a ministry on your heart that He wants you to do.

These are all good things and there is nothing wrong with having any of these future plans, but the question is, "Where does God fit into your future plans?"

Do these plans consume you more than God does? Or to put it simply, do you think about them more than God?

What does God want you to do in the future?

Is marriage God's plan for you?

Is this the right time to buy that house or is it the right house to buy?

James says: ***Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."***

So how do you know if it's the Lord's will?

Ask Him!

That sounds too easy.

Remember when we were kids, and we wanted something from our parents? What did we do? We asked them. Now they didn't always say yes, but we knew we could ask. It's the same with God who is our Father in heaven, ask Him. He may say no, but then He may say yes! You'll never know unless you ask Him.

Back in verse 14 James asks: ***For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.***

When you read through the bible, one thing we seem to forget is that every person in the bible is dead, except for Jesus and the two men in the bible who never died. (Your homework is to find out who these two men are. Hint, they are both in the Old Testament) All these people lived anywhere from 2000 to 6000 years ago. Some lived to be over 900 years old, but still James says: ***It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.***

We think we will live forever, or be able to prolong life longer and longer with new medicine, a good diet, exercise and right living. Even if you could prolong your life for a thousand years, it is still but a vapor in time.

Who long is a vapor? Put a tea pot on the stove until it whistles, then take it off the burner and watch, how long does that steam (or vapor) last? Not very long is it? It seems as soon as it appears it's gone. So it is with our lives, we are here then we are gone, just like that. You realize this as you get older, because time seems to get shorter and shorter. Remember as children when it seemed liked Christmas would never get here, but now it seems like it was just yesterday.

Eternity, this is something we can't seem to comprehend. One example I heard to explain eternity is; suppose you took an ant and had this ant walk around the earth over and over again until the ant wore down the earth beneath it to the point that it reached the center of the earth. When this has happened eternity is still just beginning. Imagine that, hundreds of billions of years it would take for this ant to wear down the earth to reach the center, but eternity is still beyond our grasp.

You say, when I am old and on my deathbed I will accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. You may not have that long, we don't all live forever and we never know when our time will come. You could be hit by a car today, or even die in your sleep from a heart attack. There are so many ways that people die other than old age, it would make your head spin just to start thinking of all the possibilities.

But it will never happen to me, we think. I pray that it won't and that if Jesus carries that you will die of old age. But in case you don't, today is the day to be ready, just in case it does happen today or tomorrow.

Some of you may read these studies every week and skim through or just pass this part. I would encourage you not to do that this week. God may be wanting to speak to you directly.

How do you get ready? You heard the term where people say they will "get right with God"? Well the only way to get right with God is to accept His Son Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Believe that you are a sinner and that Jesus dies for your sins and rose from the dead on the third day. Believe that He is at the right hand of the Father as He said He would be. And Repent (turn) from your sins.

Sounds like a lot to do. I would rather do these few things then not do them, and try to explain my way out of hell to God.

All it takes is a prayer by faith to God. Why a prayer and why by faith?

Prayer is simply talking to God just as you would talk to your best friend or your parents. You pray because you are telling God that you believe His word and in His Son Jesus Christ.

By faith because even though we have not seen Jesus being crucified or dying and rising from the dead, we believe it because we trust God and His word are true. By faith because even though you are a sinner you believe that Jesus died for ALL your sins on the cross, not some of them and the rest you will work out the best you can, but ALL of your sins, the ones you committed from birth until this time, the ones you may be committing right now and the ones you will commit in the future.

Just pray this prayer and believe it in your heart and you will be saved and will not have to worry about tomorrow.

Jesus,

I admit I am a sinner. I thought I could enjoy sin and wait until the last minute to believe in You, but I realize I was wrong and I need You as my Lord and Savior now. Please forgive me for my sins. I repent of my sins and ask You to please give me the strength not to continue in them. And if, or when I fall, may you still forgive me and love me. I believe you died for all my sins and rose from the dead and You are with God right now at His right hand. Thank you for opening my eyes to the truth of Your word. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit and may I share You with others. I ask this in your Name Jesus. AMEN!!!

If you just prayed this prayer and meant it from your heart, you are now a Christian, welcome to the family of God.

I would encourage you to find a good bible teaching church to start going to and tell someone what you just did. Also continue to pray every day and read your bible. Any questions feel free to e-mail me.

Finally, to end this week's study, Jesus spoke this parable.

† **Luke 12:16-20** *Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'*

One key thing here is, the man never asked God what to do, he made his own plans for the future. But it appears the plans he made conflicted with what God had planned for his life.

Now your life may not be required of you tonight, but what about your life, is it run by your desires or God's desire? Are you on your own path or the one God has for you? When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we give our whole life to Him. Meaning everything. Are we trying to take it back by going our own way, or are we still giving it to Him by doing His will?

✠ **Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

May God richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy as you follow the path He has laid before you!