

# Things To Avoid (James 4:11-17)

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## Scripture Text:

11. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.
12. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?
13. Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."
14. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.
15. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."
16. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.
17. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.  
(James 4:11-17 NASB1995)

## Outline:

- I. Avoid Being Judgmental (vv.11-12)
- II. Avoid Being Presumptuous (vv.13-15)
- III. Avoid Being Boastfully Arrogant (v.16)
- IV. Avoid Being A Willful Sinner (v.17)

## Worksheet:

- I. Avoid Being Judgmental (vv.11-12)
  - a. Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. (v.11)
    - i. The Law of God gives mankind rules that help to guide human interactions with each other and Himself and nature. When these laws are violated, the law-breaker elevates him/herself above the Law of God and makes themselves a critic of God's perfect word and law.
    - ii. If a person so judges the holy word of God to be unreliable and unauthoritative, then they place their own ungodly philosophies, predilections and preferences above God's word, thus become a judge of it.

iii. When James says “do not speak against one another, brethren,” what does he mean? Does he mean that we should not confront or speak out against the sin of others? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_

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1. “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:15-18 NASB1995)
  2. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. (Colossians 1:28 NASB1995)
  3. This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. (Titus 1:13-14 NASB1995)
  4. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. (Titus 2:11-15 NASB1995)
  5. But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:9-11 NASB1995)
- iv. If the word of God clearly states that we should in fact, speak out against wrong-doing and sin, then clearly James means that we should not speak slanderously against or in a defaming manor against a brother or sister.
- v. If you judge a brother or sister in this wrong or different manor than what God has said, then you make yourself a \_\_\_\_\_ of the word of God.

- b. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? (v.12)
  - i. **Who** is the only Lawgiver and Judge? \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. **Who** is the only One who is able to Save and destroy? \_\_\_\_\_
    - 1. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12 NASB1995)
    - 2. Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28 NASB1995)
  - iii. James here speaks against the practice of usurping that which belongs only to God for oneself.
  - iv. **Who** gave the Law to Moses? \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. **Who** gave prophecy to the Prophets? \_\_\_\_\_
  - vi. **Who** gave the New Testament scriptures to the Apostles? \_\_\_\_\_
  - vii. **Who** gave and inspired all scripture to be written by men? \_\_\_\_\_
    - 1. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB1995)
    - 2. So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:19-21 NASB1995)

II. Avoid Being Presumptuous (vv.13-15)

- a. Come now, you who says, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” (v.13)
  - i. **Presumptuous** - (of a person or their behavior) failing to observe the limits of what is permitted or appropriate. **Synonyms:** brazen, overconfident, arrogant, egotistical, overbold, bold, audacious, pert, forward, familiar, impertinent, fresh, free, insolent, impudent.
  - ii. All of these attitudes overlook or neglect to realize the sovereignty of God. **Where** does this presumptuous attitude begin? In what we do or what we say? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
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  - iii. **How** should this effect our speech, even if said quietly in our own minds to ourselves? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_  
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- iv. **What** is a practical way in which we can remind ourselves and others of the sovereignty of God's will over our own will? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_
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- v. **What** can happen if we do not verbally recognize the sovereignty of God when speaking about plans in the future while in the presence of others? *[discussion]* \_\_\_\_\_
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- vi. The **When, Who, What, Where, How** long, and **plans** for and the **predetermination** of the future of **presumption** as shown in this one verse. Can you identify each as expressed in this verse (v.13)
1. When: \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Who: \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What: \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Where: \_\_\_\_\_
  5. How: \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Plans: \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Predeterminations: \_\_\_\_\_
- vii. Is making these plans in and of itself **evil** or **presumptuous**? *[discussion]*
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1. The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord . All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives. Commit your works to the Lord And your plans will be established. (Proverbs 16:1-3 NASB1995)
  2. The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps. (Proverbs 16:9 NASB1995)
  3. Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the Lord will stand. (Proverbs 19:21 NASB1995)
- b. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (v.14)
- i. **What** does man lack, which would otherwise make him able to speak so confidently about his/her future plans? List the three things:
    1. He or she must be \_\_\_\_\_
    2. He or she must be \_\_\_\_\_
    3. He or she must be \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. **Who** do these attributes belong to alone? \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Man lacks \_\_\_\_\_ about the things of tomorrow.
  - iv. Man's \_\_\_\_\_ is limited by \_\_\_\_\_ who determines or beginning and end.
  - v. Compared to eternity, what is our present existence like according to this verse? \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."  
(v.15)
- i. A proper recognition of the sovereignty of God causes a person to be mindful of this reality when making any statement about plans for the future. **What** should a believer make as a practice when talking about future plans no matter how great or trivial the plan may be? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. If every step of a righteous person is ordered by God, are there any "trivial" moves or steps in the life of a believer? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Is that "doing too much"? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. **What** possible good could come from such a consistent practice? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_  
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III. Avoid Being Boastfully Arrogant (v.16)

- a. But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; (v.16a)
  - i. **Boast** – [kauchaomai]: to glory in a thing or to glory on account of a thing.
  - ii. **What** are some things that we can "glory in" and "glory on account of"?
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. **Arrogance** – [alazoneia]: empty, braggart talk; an insolent and empty assurance, which trusts in its own power and resources and shamefully despises and violates divine laws and human rights; an impious and empty presumption which trusts in the stability of earthly things
- b. all such boasting is evil. (v.16b)
  - i. James says "all such boasting is evil." What does "all" mean? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ii. **What** should this lead believers to do as it relates to making plans for the future and announcing them as such? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_  
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IV. Avoid Being A Willful Sinner (v.17)

- a. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. (v.17)
  - i. Knowing the \_\_\_\_\_ thing to do and not doing it leads to \_\_\_\_\_ in a person's life.
  - ii. **What** kind of sin is this making reference to? Sin of **commission** or **omission** or both? \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Not doing something that is right (omitting to do something that is right) is a sin of **omission**. It can be a sin of **commission** if the person who omits doing something that is right \_\_\_\_\_ the right thing to do and then \_\_\_\_\_ do it. It can also be a sin of **commission** if the person does the \_\_\_\_\_ thing in violation of his/her conscience and is disobedient to the word of God written in scripture and/or on the tablets of human hearts.

1. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13 NASB1995)
2. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, (Romans 2:14-15 NASB1995)

iv. **Where** does a person's conscience come into play in a situation like this? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_

v. If a person violates their own conscience, what have they done? \_\_\_\_\_

vi. **Where** does the Holy Spirit come into play in a situation like this? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_

vii. **What** can be expected by those who know to do the right thing, but continue to not do it? [discussion] \_\_\_\_\_

viii. \_\_\_\_\_

1. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26-27 NASB1995)
2. For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:30-31 NASB1995)