

James 4:11-12

Introduction:

1. Subjects previously covered in our study of James include:
 - a. "facing temptations" (1:2-18)
 - b. "hearing and doing the Word" (1:19-27)
 - c. "respect of persons" (2:1-13)
 - d. "faith and works" (2:14-26)
 - e. "a warning for teachers" (3:1)
 - f. "use of the tongue" (3:2-12)
 - g. "true and false wisdom" (3:13-18)
 - h. "strife among Christians" (4:1-10).
2. Throughout this letter, controlling the tongue is emphasized (1:19, 26; 3:2-12).
3. (4:11-12) A specific sinful use of the tongue is addressed: "speaking evil of others."

Discussion:

- I. (vs.11a) CHRISTIANS ARE FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER
 - A. Speak evil: speak against, slander, backbite (usually done behind a person's back with the intention of harming his reputation)
 - B. This sin is addressed many times in the Bible.
 1. "Backbiting" is a sin that caused God to give up on the Gentiles (Romans 1:28-30).
 2. "Revilers" will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).
 3. Paul did not want to find the Corinthians "backbiting" (2 Corinthians 12:20-21).
 4. Christians are to put away "evil speaking" (Ephesians 4:31; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:1).
 - C. To illustrate the seriousness of evil speaking, it is a characteristic of:
 1. fools (Proverbs 10:18b)
 2. hypocrites (Proverbs 11:9a)
 3. Satan (Revelation 12:10; Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5).
 - D. Factors that contribute to evil speaking include:
 1. having evil in the heart (Matthew 12:34)
 2. idleness (1 Timothy 5:13).
- II. WHY CHRISTIANS MUST NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER
 - A. (vs.11b) One who speaks evil of his brother becomes a judge.
 1. Judging: to unfairly find fault in others, to condemn
 2. One who slanders his brother becomes a giver of law rather than a doer of the law.
 - B. (vs.12) We are reminded that there is only one lawgiver.
 1. God alone is able to save and destroy, and He is to be feared (Matthew 10:28).
 2. God's children must not put themselves in His place.
- III. HOW TO OVERCOME AND AVOID EVIL SPEAKING
 - A. We must realize that evil speaking is a sin, and we must desire to overcome it with the Lord's help.
 - B. We must take care of occasions when we speak evil of others (James 5:16a; 1 John 1:9).
 - C. We must go to the root of the problem -- "the heart" (Matthew 15:18; Proverbs 4:23).
 - D. We must practice "the royal law" (James 2:8; Matthew 22:39; 7:12).
 - E. We must appreciate the value of speaking correctly (Proverbs 25:11).