

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
3RD-5TH GRADE
TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 8

James 4:11-12



Judging One Another

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To share with the students the importance of self-reflection, (judging our own actions) and not judging others.

Key Verses

James 4:11-12—Main Teaching Passage
Matthew 7:1-5

Memory Verse - James 4:12

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

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, James 4:7.

Take the mirror on your cart and hold it up. Ask a student to come up and look in the mirror, ask them who they see.

Take one of the stickers and place it on the child's forehead. Tell them to use the mirror to find the sticker and peel it off.

Tell the students that the mirror represents God's Word, and the sticker represents our sin. God's law shows us our sin and helps us to identify the things in our lives that God wants us to deal with.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In James 4 and Matthew 7, we read two passages directing us to be very careful about our attitudes toward one another. These passages warn us not judge our brother's actions, but instead to diligently be judging our own actions.

Notice that both passages speak specifically about judging a "brother." James 4 should not be read in the context of unbelievers and sin. Scripture is very direct about the what our attitudes should be toward sin: we should flee from evil and promote repentance and righteousness.

James 4 tells us that there is one Judge, God the Father. We are not to take try to take His place. He has given the law to speak to the hearts of all men. It is only pride that tells us that makes us think that we could even attempt to step into His place.

Matthew 7 speaks to us about the proper way to approach a brother if we believe that they are caught up in something that is sinful. It tells us that whatever measuring stick we use to judge others will be applied to our own lives. Before we speak to something in someone else's life, we need to look at our own hearts and see what areas the Lord needs to deal with us.

We are commanded to not be hypocritical in our judgment of others. If we have unrepentant sin in our own lives, how can we possibly convict others who are dealing with the same sin. Once we have removed the beam from our own eye, we can then go and speak to our brother who has a splinter in his eye.

LOOK

The Bible contains many laws and commandments from God. In His wisdom, God looked down at us and saw that we were hurting ourselves by the way that we living. He gave us His law to protect us and others, and to help us to live our lives in an upright way that honors both Him, and the people around us.

Sometimes when we look at the law of God, and the people who are around us, and we realize that those people aren't keeping God's Word. It is really easy to hear about someone stealing something, or lying about something, and point our finger and say, "that person is doing the wrong thing." What is far more difficult is look at God's Word, and then look at our own lives and see the ways that we have broken God's law.

We have already seen that God's law has been given to you and me so that it can help *us*. It is like a mirror that shows us where our problems

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK (Continued)

are and what needs to be changed in our lives. If we only use God's Word to point out other people's mistakes and flaws, then we have missed out on what God wants to do in us.

Jesus taught us that when we see someone else who knows God's Word doing the wrong thing, we should go to them and show them where and how they are making a mistake. Before we do that, however, we need take a good long look inside our own hearts. If you have a problem with telling lies, people won't listen to you when you tell them that lying is wrong. If you have a problem with gossip, or getting angry and losing control, then people won't listen to you if you tell them that they shouldn't gossip or get angry.

The message that underlies James 4 is that you can only judge your own intentions. You can't know what another person was thinking, you can't see what is going on in another person's heart. Only God can know what other people were thinking about. He is the Judge who will determine all of these things in the end.

If we see something that is blatantly against God's Word, we should speak out against it. If someone is being bullied at school, if someone around you is being insulted and picked on, we should stand up for those people, but again, we should make sure that we ourselves aren't caught up in those same sinful behaviors. God's Word should speak so powerfully to us that we can see and deal with the things that are going on in our lives, which then allows us to speak the truth in love to our neighbors.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize James 4:12.

Give the students a chance to pray silently to the Lord. Instruct them to ask God if there is anything in their lives, anything that they have been doing that He wants to change and work on.

Pray: Thank the Lord for giving His Word as a standard for righteousness. Ask Him to expose areas in our own lives that are not being lived in obedience to Him and to change those areas.

Parent Question: How is God's Word like a mirror?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on James 4:11-12 and Matthew 7:1-5 by David Guzik

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?

a. Do not speak evil of one another: Humbling ourselves and getting right with God must result in our getting right with other people. When we are right with other people, it will show in the way we talk about them. So we must not speak evil of one another and not judge our brother.

i. Speak evil translates the ancient Greek word katalalia. “Katalalia is the sin of those who meet in corners and gather in little groups and pass on confidential information which destroy the good name of those who are not there to defend themselves.” (Barclay)

ii. This sin is wrong for two reasons. First, it breaks the royal law that we should love one another. Second, it takes a right of judgment that only God has.

b. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law: When we judge our brother, we put ourselves in the same place as the law, in effect judging the law. This is something that we have no authority to do, because there is one Lawgiver – so who are you to judge another?

i. “However high and orthodox our view of God’s law might be, a failure actually to do it says to the world that we do not in fact put much store by it.” (Moo)

c. Who are you to judge another? This is an extension of the same humility that James writes about in this chapter. When we have proper humility before God, it just isn’t within us to arrogantly judge our brother.

i. “This is not to rule out civil courts and judges. Instead, it is to root out the harsh, unkind, critical spirit that continually finds fault with others.” (Burdick)

ii. “Who art thou; what a sorry creature, a man, a worm, that thou shouldest lift up thyself into God’s place, and make thyself a judge of one not subject to thee!” (Poole)

Matthew 7:1-5

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

a. Judge not, that you be not judged: Here Jesus moved to another idea in the Sermon on the Mount. He had primarily dealt with themes connected with the interior spiritual life (attitudes in giving, prayer, fasting, materialism, and anxiety over material things). Now He touches on an important theme related to the way we think of and treat others.

i. We remember that Jesus called for a righteousness that was greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). In the way some people think, the way to make one's self more righteous is to be more judgmental of others. Jesus here rebuked that kind of thinking.

b. Judge not, that you be not judged: With this command Jesus warned against passing judgment upon others, because when we do so, we will be judged in a similar manner.

i. Among those who seem to know nothing of the Bible, this is the verse that seems to be most popular. Yet most the people who quote this verse don't understand what Jesus said. They seem to think (or hope) that Jesus commanded a universal acceptance of any lifestyle or teaching.

ii. Just a little later in this same sermon (Matthew 7:15-16), Jesus commanded us to know ourselves and others by the fruit of their life, and some sort of assessment is necessary for that. The Christian is called to show unconditional love, but the Christian is not called to unconditional approval. We really can love people who do things that should not be approved of.

iii. So while this does not prohibit examining the lives of others, it certainly prohibits doing it in the spirit it is often done. An example of unjust judgment was the disciples' condemnation of the woman who came to anoint the feet of Jesus with oil (Matthew 26:6-13). They thought she was wasting something; Jesus said she had done a good work that would always be remembered. They had a rash, harsh, unjust judgment.

- We break this command when we think the worst of others.
- We break this command when we only speak to others of their faults.
- We break this command when we judge an entire life only by its worst moments.
- We break this command when we judge the hidden motives of others.
- We break this command when we judge others without considering ourselves in their same circumstances.
- We break this command when we judge others without being mindful that we ourselves will be judged.

c. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged: Jesus did not prohibit the judgment of others. He only requires that our judgment be completely fair, and that we only judge others by a standard we would also like to be judged by.

i. When our judgment in regard to others is wrong, it is often not because we judge according to a standard, but because we are hypocritical in the application of that standard – we ignore the standard in our own life. It is common to judge others by one standard and ourselves by another standard – being far more generous to ourselves than others.

d. With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you: This is the principle upon which Jesus built the command, "Judge not, that you be not judged." God will measure unto us according to the same measure we use for others. This is a powerful motivation for us to be generous with love, forgiveness, and goodness to others. If we want more of those things from God, we should give more of them to others.

- i. According to the teaching of some rabbis in Jesus' time, God had two measures that He used to judge people. One was a measure of justice and the other was a measure of mercy. Whichever measure you want God to use with you, you should use that same measure with others.
- ii. We should only judge another's behavior when we are mindful of the fact that we ourselves will be judged, and we should consider how we would want to be judged.

2. (3-5) An illustration of Jesus' principle regarding judging.

"And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 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? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

- a. Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? The figures of a speck and a plank are real figures, yet used humorously. Jesus shows how we are generally far more tolerant to our own sin than we are to the sin of others.
 - i. Though there might be a literal speck in one's eye, there obviously would not be a literal plank or board in an eye. Jesus used these exaggerated, humorous pictures to make His message easier to understand and more memorable.
 - ii. It is a humorous picture: A man with a board in his eye trying to help a friend remove a speck from the friend's eye. You can't think of the picture without smiling and being amused by it.
 - iii. An example of looking for a speck in the eye of another while ignoring the plank in one's own is when the religious leaders brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus. She had certainly sinned; but their sin was much worse and Jesus exposed it as such with the statement, He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first (John 8:7).
- b. Look, a plank is in your own eye: Jesus indicates that the one with the plank in his own eye would not immediately be aware of it. He is blind to his obvious fault. It is the attempt to correct the fault of someone else when we ourselves have the same (or greater fault) that earns the accusation, "Hypocrite!"
 - i. "Jesus is gentle, but he calls that man a 'hypocrite' who fusses about small things in others, and pays no attention to great matters at home in his own person." (Spurgeon)
 - ii. Our hypocrisy in these matters is almost always more evident to others than to ourselves. We may find a way to ignore the plank in our own eye, but others notice it immediately. A good example of this kind of hypocrisy was David's reaction to Nathan's story about a man who unjustly stole and killed another man's lamb. David quickly condemned the man, but was blind to his own sin, which was much greater (2 Samuel 12).
- c. First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye: Jesus didn't say that it was wrong for us to help our brother with the speck in his eye. It is a good thing to help your brother with his speck, but not before dealing with the plank in your own eye.