

James Series Going Deeper

5- Day Devotional

Week 12, Day 1: Do Not Speak Evil Against One Another

Primary Verse:

Reading: James 4:6-12; James 3:5-10

Focus Verse:

“Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.”

James 4:11

Devotional:

James 4:11 does not come out of nowhere. It flows directly out of James’ teaching on pride, worldliness, repentance, and humility.

Earlier in James 4, he exposes the source of fights and quarrels among believers. The problem is not merely personality differences, difficult relationships, or stressful circumstances. James says the deeper issue is that our passions are at war within us. Our desires become disordered. Our pride rises up. Our flesh wants to be satisfied. And when our hearts are dominated by worldly desires, conflict with others becomes inevitable.

Then James gives the path of humble repentance.

God gives more grace.

Submit to God.

Resist the devil.

Draw near to God.

Cleanse your hands.

Purify your hearts.

Mourn over sin.

Humble yourselves before the Lord.

Then immediately James says, **“Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.”**

That means one of the first places true humility must show up is in our mouth.

It is possible to talk about humility, repentance, restoration, and drawing near to God, while still using our words to tear down people made in God’s image. James will not let us separate our worship from our words. He will not let us claim humility before God while speaking with pride toward people.

Speaking evil against one another includes slander, gossip, accusation, belittling, exaggeration, contempt, and private conversations meant to damage another person's reputation. But it can also include something more subtle. It can include using true information with a sinful heart.

That is where this becomes deeply convicting.

Many of us defend our words by saying, "But what I said was true."

But James is not only asking if our words are factually accurate. He is asking whether our words are holy. He is asking whether they are loving. He is asking whether they are submitted to God. He is asking whether they are coming from humility or pride.

A statement can be true and still be sinful.

It can be true, but unnecessary.

It can be true, but cruel.

It can be true, but exaggerated.

It can be true, but spoken to the wrong person.

It can be true, but spoken from bitterness.

It can be true, but used to destroy rather than restore.

James is showing us that the issue is not only the content of our speech. The issue is the heart behind our speech.

When I speak evil against a brother or sister, I am usually not speaking from a low place. I am speaking from an elevated place. I am standing over them. I am making myself superior. I am treating their failure as an opportunity to make myself feel righteous.

But James calls them **brothers**.

That word matters.

These are not merely people we disagree with. These are not merely people who frustrate us. These are not merely people who have failed, offended, disappointed, or sinned. These are brothers and sisters in Christ.

They have the same Father.

They are redeemed by the same blood.

They are dependent on the same mercy.

They are under the same Lord.

They are part of the same family.

So James is saying, "Do not use your mouth to destroy someone Jesus died to save."

This does not mean we ignore sin. It does not mean we never confront, correct, warn, or protect. Scripture commands us to speak truth. But James is confronting the kind of speech

that does not come from love, restoration, protection, or obedience. He is confronting speech that comes from pride, anger, bitterness, superiority, and condemnation.

The question for today is not simply, “Have I said something false?”

The deeper question is:

Have I spoken about people in a way that dishonors God?

Have I used truth as a weapon instead of medicine?

Have I spoken to others about someone instead of speaking lovingly and directly when appropriate?

Have I enjoyed exposing what is wrong in someone else?

Have I hidden gossip behind concern?

Have I hidden slander behind a prayer request?

Have I spoken from humility or from pride?

James 4:11 calls us to bring our mouths back under the lordship of Jesus.

A humbled heart before God should produce a humbled mouth toward people.

Reflection Questions:

1. **Where have my words recently revealed pride, bitterness, contempt, or superiority toward someone else?**
2. **Have I defended sinful speech simply because what I said was true?**
3. **Do my words about others sound like someone who has received mercy from God?**

Action Step:

Before speaking about another person today, pause and ask: **“Am I speaking from love, humility, truth, and a desire for restoration, or am I speaking from pride, frustration, and judgment?”**

Prayer:

Father, forgive me for the ways I have used my mouth to tear down people You have called me to love. Forgive me for speaking from pride while claiming to walk in humility. Teach me to bring my words under Your authority. Give me a heart that loves truth, seeks restoration, and speaks with mercy. In Jesus’ name, amen.