

# James Series Going Deeper

## 5- Day Devotional

### Week 12, Day 4: There Is Only One Lawgiver and Judge

#### Primary Verse:

**Reading:** James 4:12; Romans 14:10-12; Isaiah 33:22

#### Focus Verse:

**“There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.”**

James 4:12

#### Devotional:

James 4:12 tells us why sinful judgment is so serious.

He says:

**“There is only one lawgiver and judge.”**

That sentence should bring every proud thought low.

There is only one Lawgiver.

That means God alone has the authority to define what is right and wrong. God alone determines what is holy and unholy. God alone defines justice, mercy, righteousness, sin, repentance, forgiveness, restoration, and final judgment.

We do not create the standard.

We do not edit the standard.

We do not stand above the standard.

We receive God’s Word, submit to God’s Word, obey God’s Word, and speak according to God’s Word.

This matters because sinful judgment often happens when we start operating by our own law.

We create our own standards for what people deserve. We decide how quickly someone should change. We decide how much mercy is appropriate. We decide whether someone’s repentance is enough. We decide whether restoration is possible. We decide who is worthy of patience and who is not.

But James says, “There is only one Lawgiver.”

Then he says there is only one Judge.

God is not only the One who gives the law. He is the One who judges according to the law.

And God is the only One qualified to do this perfectly.

God sees everything.

He sees the action.

He sees the motive.

He sees the heart.

He sees the hidden details.

He sees the full story.

He sees the wounds.

He sees the rebellion.

He sees the repentance.

He sees the hypocrisy.

He sees the sincerity.

He sees what people know.

He sees what people do not know.

He sees what was done in public.

He sees what was done in secret.

We do not.

We see partially.

We know partially.

We interpret imperfectly.

We judge through limited information.

We judge through our pain.

We judge through our assumptions.

We judge through our preferences.

We judge through our own pride and fear.

That does not mean we never make moral judgments. Scripture commands us to discern truth from error, righteousness from sin, good fruit from bad fruit, and faithful teaching from false teaching.

But James is forbidding the kind of judgment where we take the final seat.

The kind of judgment where we act like we know the whole story.

The kind of judgment where we act like we know the heart.

The kind of judgment where we act like we have the right to condemn.

The kind of judgment where we act as though another person answers ultimately to us.

Romans 14 says something similar:

**“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”**

That is the truth James wants us to feel.

Your brother does not ultimately stand before you.

Your sister does not ultimately stand before you.

Your neighbor does not ultimately stand before you.

They stand before God.

And so do you.

That should humble us deeply.

Then James says this one Lawgiver and Judge is the One **“who is able to save and to destroy.”**

God alone has final authority over salvation and judgment. God alone can redeem the guilty. God alone can condemn the unrepentant. God alone can restore the broken. God alone can discipline the rebellious. God alone can expose what is hidden. God alone can forgive what no one else can forgive. God alone can bring final justice.

This means I must stop speaking as though I know someone’s final chapter.

I do not know what God may still do.

I do not know how deeply God may convict.

I do not know how powerfully God may restore.

I do not know how mercy may triumph.

I do not know how justice will come.

I do not know what God sees that I cannot see.

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge.

And I am not Him.

This does not make us passive. It makes us humble.

We can still speak truth.

We can still confront sin.

We can still protect people.

We can still call for repentance.

We can still establish boundaries.

We can still practice accountability.

But we must do all of it while remembering that the throne is occupied.

We are not the Savior.

We are not the final Judge.

We are servants under God.

That changes everything about how we speak.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. **Where have I acted like I knew someone's whole story, heart, motives, or final outcome?**
2. **Do I speak about people as though I am accountable to the One true Judge?**
3. **How would my words change if I remembered that both they and I will stand before God?**

### **Action Step:**

When tempted to judge someone today, say this quietly before the Lord: **"There is one Lawgiver and Judge, and I am not Him."**

### **Prayer:**

God, You alone are Lawgiver and Judge. Forgive me for taking a seat that belongs only to You. Forgive me for acting like I know what only You know and can do what only You can do. Teach me to live under Your authority with humility, truth, mercy, and fear of the Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.