

God's Verdict on Man's Judgment (James 4:12)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on January 24, 2010

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Last week we talked about sinful critical speech and judging in v. 11, a very important subject to understand, and this week we want to cover an equally important aspect of this subject in v. 11 in a popular phrase from Scripture that is very easy to misunderstand, a question that has one of the most easily recognizable phrases from God's Word in our day and age: "*who are you to judge?*" We need God's verdict on man's judging, and God's help to judge rightly what this text is saying (and not saying) about judgment (and what kind of judgment) in the context of His authoritative absolute Law.

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?***

If you have the KJV it uses the word "another" at the end, and it begins saying there's "one Lawgiver" – NKJV footnotes some manuscripts have "and Judge" – the earliest and best manuscripts discovered since 1611 include "and Judge" and "neighbor" and we'll be using that preferred translation for the sake of this study. The main point of the verse is clear in most any version you may have, but I want to start with what is not so clear to our world and even to us as Christians who are influenced by the way our world thinks: if God is *the Judge* ultimately, is it ever ok for us to judge?

The way to understand a text, of course, is by studying its context. I want to begin by also acknowledging the context we live in and challenge of our times. I can't help but reflect on the language of this verse in light of what day it is today, Sanctity of Life Sunday:

- Do we have a right to judge when something is not right?
- On what authority and basis and standard should right and wrong be judged, not only by individuals, but by human judges and law-givers and law-makers (ex: re: abortion)?
- Who determines what's right in relation to women's rights?
- Who will speak for the rights of unborn women?
- Can human law overturn God's law? (Acts 4:19-20)
- Whose prerogative is it to destroy, according to Jas. 4:12?
- What does the just Judge think of innocent life destroyed?
- What does the ultimate highest Supreme Court have to say?

This won't be a sermon on abortion, but I do want to begin with this timely subject as an example of how discerning judgment, critical thinking and a biblical worldview are so vital for all of our life.

Dave Daubenmire tells a true story that illustrates this: "Darlin', please don't go into that building," my friend pleaded as we stood outside the abortion clinic. "That is a place of death. You are going to walk in there a mother of a beautiful child, but when you leave you will still be a mother but, the mother of a dead child. You will never forget this day...you will regret it for the rest of your life. Please let us help you, avoid this terrible decision. We will help you keep your child. Jesus loves the little children."

Sheepishly and forlornly, the teenage mother turned to my friend and whimpered, “I have Jesus in my heart. He understands the position I am in and He will forgive me for my sins. I am a Christian who made a mistake.”

“Sweetheart,” my gentle, loving friend begged the young mother, “if you have Jesus in your heart please don’t take him in to that place of death. He came to bring life. He gave you that child. It is a gift from God....let your baby live.” ... the young girl’s assumed-to-be mother who was joining the teenager in her sin directed her hateful stare towards my faithful friend. “*We’re Christians too, but we actually follow what Jesus told us...JUDGE NOT,*” she spit the words through her clenched teeth, “*You would better represent Christianity if you followed **that** command as well. Young lady, who are you to judge?” [is that the intent of Jas 4:12?]*

Sadly, most Christians think “judge not” is the eleventh commandment. Unfortunately, as we do ministry on the streets, that is the one Bible verse that most people love to quote. They are not sure where it is found, but in today’s modern Christianity, [“*who are you to judge?*” and] “*judge not*” carries more weight than another of Christ’s one-liners, “*Go and sin no more.*” This is a situation where a little Bible knowledge can be a dangerous thing.¹

What Type of Judging is NOT forbidden by James 4:11-12?

1. James is not against judging as sin what God’s Word has judged to be sin (James 4:2-6; 1 Cor. 5:1-2, 9-13)

James 4:2 *You **lust** and do not have; so you commit **murder** ...*

James 4:4 *You **adulteresses** ...*

God’s Word has judged murder, adultery, lust, etc., to be sin. If we or others commit murder, adultery, etc., we must judge that’s sin. It would actually be pride to disregard God’s verdict (not good idea; 4:6a). So if you point out where God’s Word calls something sin and the response is “well, *who are you to judge?*” you can reply, “I know I’m nobody and wouldn’t expect anyone to trust my personal judgments or opinions, I don’t even myself; I trust only God’s.”

Turn to 1 Corinthians 5 (1st Californians?). Corinth was in some ways the “Bay Area” of that part of the world, very “tolerant” and “accepting” of all kinds of people and sexual sinful unions. You get the idea reading 1 Cor. 5 that the one sin their society mourned was intolerance, and imposing biblical morality was “arrogant” (ironically this church prided themselves on never ever judging?)

1 Cor 5:1 *It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father’s wife.*² **You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst ...**

⁹ *I wrote you in my letter **not to associate with immoral people;***¹⁰ *I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.*¹¹ *But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any **so-called brother** if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.*¹² *For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Do you not judge those who are within the church?***¹³ *But those who are outside, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.***

With unbelievers outside the church, God will judge them but our job is not shunning them, it's loving them by giving them the gospel. But there's a distinction with how we are to judge brothers in Christ (or at least professing believers, a "so-called brother" in v. 11; note that James 4:11 uses "brother" 3x in Christian context). The response to one *in the church* is to reprove him for his pattern of sin, and if he won't repent, to eventually remove by judgment of godly leaders, following the process Jesus gave in Matthew 18. The church of Jesus Christ is not to be tolerant of unrepentant sin lifestyles like that, as defined by God's judgment and verdict, v. 12 *says we're to judge those in the church*. Allowing sin to go un-checked and un-confronted is not humility, v. 2 says it's *arrogant* for a church to not deal with sin, discipline its own biblically and to disassociate eventually. Who are you *not* to judge sin as sin, Paul rebuked them. To be intolerant of God's clear judgments is pride.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 *If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame [goal: repentance]. **Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.***

The world recognizes standards must be upheld with consequences when they're violated in many areas of life. Even unsaved families see the need for intervention when a family member is ensnared in harmful ways. Why can't God's family have standards? God does have standards.

2. James is not against judging that another is in sin and in need of your help (James 5:19-20; Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1-2)

James 5:19 *My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth [how can we without some "judging"?] and one turns him back,²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

James doesn't say in this context "don't be concerned of a brother straying; *who are you to judge*, we all like sheep go astray?" No, if God has judged something to be sin and better judgment sees your friend on its dangerous path, who are you *not* to try to help him?

Matthew 18:15 *"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."¹⁶ "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."¹⁷ "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 [judgment of discipline/disassociation]*

But that sounds judgmental, you say, to have to tell the church. But who are you to judge that God's commands should bow to 21st century tolerant sentiments? Who are we to judge that what King Jesus teaches here is not how we should do it today? Who are we to judge what true love looks like or that sin is not that serious to God? It actually *is truly loving*. Because sin is serious and deadly, serious measures are necessary for us to take it as seriously as God does. The context is not just an occasional slip, which we all do, but a straying sheep (v. 12) and the joy if we can bring him back (v. 13). The sin is not just a little interpersonal issue between you and him, but a serious sin calling for drastic action, even severing a member of the body (v. 8-9), a sin not only affecting the sinning brother but it may cause others to stumble (v. 6-7).

The goal is restoration, winning back a brother (v. 15b). Verse 16 ensures this is not just a personal tiff, issue, or your judgmental criticism of another, but is sin as established by justice, facts, witnesses, confirming the sin's character and/or continuation.

Galatians 6:1 *Brethren, even if anyone is **caught in any trespass**, you who are spiritual, **restore** such a one in a spirit of **gentleness**; each one **looking to yourself**, so that you too will not be tempted.* ² *Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill **the law of Christ**.*

The law of Christ calls us to love. Who are we to judge we're above this law? It's unspiritual *not* to obey this. When you proceed to step 2 of the Matthew 18 passage, you do want spiritually mature, humble gentle believers to help you help your brother and bear his burden. It is not to be a personal vendetta to get back at someone, but it's motivated by concern for one ensnared in a sinful trap or net. 'In an American courtroom what does a judge do? ... He doesn't judge *the person*, he judges *the evidence* [and he is do so fairly and based on the standard of the law *above him*, not his prejudices]. Can anyone imagine a defendant saying to the judge "judge not, Your Honor," or "who are you to judge"? That would be ridiculous to say! Judging is his job. It would be a sad state of affairs if the judge was more worried about [what people think of him than what Law demands, more worried about] being nice than he was about [dealing w/] lawbreakers and protecting the innocent.

[The key is that an authority higher than the judge gives his command to judge based on a standard higher than opinion, actions measured against an unchanging law. The judge should apply the law, *not make laws* as an activist or based on his agenda. And if an authority far higher than us (God) commands us to judge (Jn 7:24, not what's inside someone but when certain outward actions are sinful) then we need to care more about pleasing and obeying God's commands to judge than pleasing our world and obeying postmodern commands not to judge. We just need to make sure we're judging *what* God commands, *how* God commands us to, and based on a standard higher than us, God's unchanging Law. In the story I began the sermon with, the author asks]

'Would my friend at the abortion clinic have been more loving, would she have been nicer, would she have been more Christ-like, if she had stood silently by while that young teenage girl killed her child and embarked on a life of regret as a result of the second "mistake" she was about to make? If we loved her wouldn't we want to prevent that? Silence isn't golden, it's yellow. Warn the wicked. What Would Jesus Do? I'll let you be the judge.'²

3. James (and Jesus) are not against Discerning judgment (1 Thess. 5:21; Luke 7:43, 12:57; 1 Cor. 2:15, *TURN TO 6:1-6)

James 1:16 *Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*

Gullibility and naivety are not part of the fruit of the Spirit
1 Thess 5:21 *examine everything carefully* ... [discerning judgment]

Luke 7:40 *And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher."* ⁴¹ *"A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty."* ⁴² *"When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?"* ⁴³ *Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more."* *And He said to him, ["judge not"? no, Jesus said] "You have **judged correctly**."*

In Luke 12:57, Jesus rebuked some for *not* judging: “*And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?*”

1 Corinthians 2:15 (NKJV) *he who is spiritual judges all things...*

1 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV) *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world [in Christ’s coming Kingdom]? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?* ³ *Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?* ⁴ *If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?* ⁵ *I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?* ⁶ *But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!*

Wise believers and leaders in the church should be sought to judge disputes within, Paul says. Don’t sue each other, come to the elders

4. James is not against judging / examining yourself to see if you’re saved (James 2:14-26; 2 Cor. 13:5)

2 Cor. 13:5 *Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?*

5. James is not against judging a teacher's words against God’s Word (James 3:1; Acts 17:11; Isa. 8:20; Matt. 7:15-23)

James 3:1 says teachers have a stricter judgment and standard. Acts 17:11 commends judging everything taught by the Scriptures. Isa. 8:20 (NKJV) *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*

Matthew 7 (the same chapter where Jesus said “judge not” He says a few verses later)

¹⁵ *“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves [how can you obey this if you never judge? v. 1 doesn’t rule out this type of judgment]* ¹⁶ *“You will know them by their fruits ...* ¹⁷ *“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit ...* ²⁰ *“So then, you will know them by their fruits.*

We’re not to judge hypocritically or with our eyes blinded by sin in our vision (v.5) but we should judge false teaching and false living. There are many false teachers and there are many false religions, but just to say that in our world is enough to make the “judge not” postmodern police come out with “tolerance tasers” and blowhorns blasting words about our intolerance which they’re intolerant of!

In case you missed it, on Fox News Sunday, 1/3/2010, Brit Hume was on a panel of pundits and analysts talking about Tiger Woods' troubles. Noting that the great golfer once publicly identified himself with Buddhism, the faith of his mother, Brit Hume said:

"I don't think that faith offers the kind of forgiveness and redemption that is offered by the Christian faith. So my message to Tiger would be, 'Tiger, turn to the Christian faith and you can make a total recovery and be a great example to the world.'"

Listen to some of the responses soon unleashed in the media:

- "**not a matter to be judged** by some pompous TV anchor ... rude and crass ... bad manners" (one called him a bigot)
- USA Today wrote that Brit Hume was "talking trash"
- One said he "denigrated" and "diminished" Christianity
- An MSNBC segment guest said Hume's remarks were "an insult to Christianity," while the show's anchor said Hume's words "threaten[ed] Tiger Woods into converting to Christianity" and he even seemed to compare Hume's remarks to an Islamic terrorist, suggesting that "the worst example" of this kind of "proselytizing" are "jihadists."
- Listen to this blog response: "Tiger can do what he pleases I disagree with your "old timer" thinking. **Who are you to judge? Only god can judge him. NOT YOU.** Stop it with the preaching ... LOL Again, another "fool" who thinks superstars have to live a MORAL life to be considered a good person. Marriage Vows? LOL"]

Ironically, when rhetoric calmed down and journalists actually called prominent scholars of Buddhism for comment, they tended to confirm Hume's underlying point about Buddhist theology: *Redemption actually is a concept flowing from Judeo-Christian tradition rather than Eastern thought!* Those who argue strongest for tolerance are often the most intolerant toward Christianity, and ironically Hume's critics ironically showed far more intolerance than what they were protesting. The very assertion that no one has the right to judge another like Hume did is itself a judgment!

What Type of Judging is forbidden in James 4:11-12?

In some cases it would be sinful NOT to make judgments or discern what God has judged, but sinful judging is a real problem.

Dave Swavelly: 'In many years of pastoral counseling, I have repeatedly found that the difficulties people face in their marriages, families, churches, and jobs can be traced back to wrongful judgments that have been made in their minds concerning others. And almost as often I have found that these people are not even aware that this problem exists, or that it is a primary cause of their conflicts. But when they have learned about it, I am glad to say that through repentance from this sin and practicing new ways of thinking, many of them have experienced peace as never before, in their hearts and in their relationships with others.'³

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. Do not speak [lit. "down to"] one another, brethren ...

1. Lifting Up Self In Putting Down Your Brother

Romans 14:10 (NIV) *You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother?* [ESV has "despise," others have "regard with contempt" or "show contempt"]

Jonathan Edwards, in *Charity and Its Fruits*, writes: ‘a disposition to judge and condemn shews a conceited and arrogant disposition. It has the appearance of a person’s setting himself up above others, as though he were fit to be the lord and judge of his fellow-servants, and he supposed they were to stand or fall according to his sentence. This seems implied in the language of [James 4:11]’⁴

2. Undermining Gods Word (4:11, 1 Cor. 4:5-7)

1 Cor. 4:5 *Therefore do not go on passing judgment **before the time**, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the **things hidden** in the darkness and disclose the **motives of men’s hearts**; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.*

⁶ *Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may **learn not to exceed what is written**, so that no one of you will become arrogant*

- **Determining our brother’s heart or motives**

Jas 4:11b *He who speaks against a brother or **judges his brother**...*

1 Sam 17:28 *Eliab his oldest **brother** heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab’s **anger burned against David and he said**, “Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? **I know your insolence [NKJV “pride”] and the wickedness of your heart [NIV “I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is” or another has “I know your evil intent” (NAB)]**; for you have come down in order to see the battle.”²⁹ But David said, “What have I done now? ...”*

The truth was he was doing what Jesse had told him to, but his brother presumed to judge his heart and he spoke against him. That’s exactly what James 4:11 is talking about, talking down to a brother (in this case, a literal blood-brother), and James says that type of speaking against him is closely related to judging his heart. We are not to judge by appearances, only God sees the heart (16:7)

- **Disregarding God’s Law in self-righteous words**

James 4:11c ... *speaks against the law **and judges the law** ...*

Romans 2:1 *Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things ...¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,²⁰ a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,²¹ you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? ...²³ You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law ... you dishonor God ...*

- **Disobeying God’s Law in Hypocritical Living (Mt. 7)**

*Matt. 7:1 Do not judge so that you will not be judged.² For **in the way you judge**, you will be judged; and **by your standard** of measure, it will be measured to you.³ Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?*

⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You **hypocrite**, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Now if you keep reading, v. 6 tells us not to give what's holy to dogs, so there is a judgment required there to determine / discern what type of person you're talking to and if it's profitable to talk to one who Proverbs would call a fool (there's a lot of Proverbs you can't obey if you never make discerning judgments with God's help). Vs. 15ff warn against false teacher (requiring judgment).

Notice the context of v. 5 is addressed to *hypocritical* judging (not all). Notice also what many miss at the end of v. 5: your brother does need help with what's in his eye. It's not saying "never help your brother with his sin," but it's saying you're not going to be able to help him when you're blinded by massive sin problems that everyone sees but you. Deal with your sin *so you can* help others.

3rd mark of sinful judging: Usurping Gods Role (James 4:12)

His role as Law-giver

James 4:12 *There is only one Lawgiver ...*

God's moral Law is sufficient without man making rules for others

Matthew 15:9 (NIV) *...their teachings are but rules taught by men*

Now any Christian school, organization, employer, group, family has every right to make rules for itself that don't require chapter and verse. Even strict rules (stricter than the letter of the law of God) are not legalistic or judgmental *in themselves* if simply seen as what the authority thinks is wise for that environment but not a universal standard imposed on all as an external measure of where someone's internal soul is in relation to God. So don't label other Christians legalistic or Pharisees or judgmental just because they are strict, super-conservative, etc. You may not realize that in your concern over being judged you can also very easily judge them!

The problem is not rules in and of themselves, but it's making doctrine or duty out of man's teaching, not God's (Mt 15:9 ESV).

Colossians 2 (NIV) ²⁰ *Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you **submit to its rules**: ²¹ "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? ²² These ... are **based on human commands and teachings**. ²³ **Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility ... but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence** [man's rules don't make man righteous, don't submit to them in that way]*

We read earlier in 1 Cor. 4 not to "go beyond what is written" in judging others by extra-biblical rules we make for us / our family:

- Ex: we've don't have alcohol in our home (I can tell you why if interested), but I don't make rules to judge others by

- We haven't had cable TV for most of our time in NorCal, but I have to be careful not to judge others who do have it
- On Sunday evenings we've been studying courtship and I have come to more conservative views on dating than many but trying to focus on Principles not personal applications
- When differing theologically on secondary issues we must judge what Scripture teaches but be careful not to judge the spiritual state of those holding other views (eschatology, baptism, charismatic, Arminian, too reformed, not reformed enough, too dispensational, not dispensational enough, etc.)
- We've always sung hymns from the hymnal here, but we must not judge our worship superior to others (or inferior)?
- I feel that if you don't sing some of the great hymns you miss out but there's no hymns-only piano-only law in Bible
- You may prefer the KJV, that's ok, just don't be KJV-only
- Home-schooling is ok but not a home-school-only judging
- Even within educational and parenting paradigms it's ok to have diverse applications of same biblical principles, ex: some may think their kids should never be taught in public school, other homeschoolers are ok after 18 while others let kids attend JC at 16, some earlier, some are in charters, some are in Christian school or public school or combo ... in these situations and more you need to wrestle with what is wise and biblically best and determine "as for me and my family we will serve the Lord" in this way, but these types of issues should never be treated like gospel truth that we proselytize others to with evangelistic zeal and judge by.

If you want to study this subject further, I highly recommend the books on bottom of your note sheet (Dave Swavely, Jerry Bridges)

And let me be clear I am speaking not as someone who is innocent of sinful judging but as someone convicted by this study. I am a recovering legalist who can easily relapse and usurp God's role ...

His role as Judge

James 4:12 *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge ...*

He serves as both executive and judicial branches of Divine govt. Judge Jesus has the only infallible perspective with all the facts

John 7:24a *Do not judge according to appearance ...*

Proverbs 18:17 *The first to plead his case seems right, Until another comes and examines him.*

If you only hear one side or operate only by sight; don't judge, and don't presume to judge in arenas where only God can truly do so.

His role as Savior or Punisher

... the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you ...

In Hebrews 10, the Lord says “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*” (this is not our job to punish with sinful judgmental words; James 4:11-12). Hebrews 10 (NIV) adds³⁰ ... “*The Lord will judge his people.*”³¹ *It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ...*³⁹ *But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.*

If God has saved someone, don’t destroy him with judging words. The only reason you’re alive and able to make any words come out of your mouth is if you have been saved from the terrifying hands of the Living God because Jesus took the vengeance you deserved. He pays and serves the sentence for those who recognize their guilt and plead for mercy through the work of Christ, not their works. If your sins are not forgiven through repentance, be very afraid (v.31)

4th mark of sinful judging: **Unjust Judging (2:2-4; Jn 5:30, 7:24)**

James 2:3 says if ... *you pay special attention to ... one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,”*⁴ *have you not **made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?*** [or evil thoughts]

Jesus said in Jn 5:30 *I judge; and **My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.***

*This is the key to just judgment, not seeking our will but God’s and this helps us obey Jn 7:24 “... *judge with righteous judgment.*”

5th type of sinful judging: **Unloving Judging** (Lev. 19, Rom. 14)

James 4:11 says speaking against / judging a brother is speaking against / judging the law, which I think chapter 2 explains as the law of love:⁸ *If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,**” you are doing well.*⁹ *But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are **convicted by the law as transgressors.***

Lev. 19:15 *‘You shall do no **injustice in judgment;** you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but **you are to judge your neighbor fairly.***¹⁶ *‘You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD.*¹⁷ *‘You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; **you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.***¹⁸ *‘**You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge** against the sons of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself;** I am the LORD.*

Romans 14⁴ ***Who are you to judge the servant of another?*** [in areas where only his boss can, context: days, food, drink]...¹³ *Therefore **let us not judge one another** anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way ...*¹⁵ *For if because of food [some had conscience issues with some food] **your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love.** Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died ...*¹⁹ *So then we **pursue the things which make for peace and the building up** of one another.*²⁰ ***Do not tear down** the work of God ...*²¹ *It is good not to ... do anything by which your brother stumbles.*²² *The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God ...*

Last type of sinful judging James forbids: Unmerciful Judging

The merciless judging and speech in James 4:11 was explained in 2:12: ¹² *So **speak and so act as those who are to be judged** by the law of liberty [God’s Law frees us while the law of legalism keeps us in bondage].* ¹³ *For judgment will be merciless to **one who has shown no mercy**; mercy triumphs over judgment [praise God!].*

4:12 *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?*

We don’t deserve to be saved, but praise God that mercy triumphs over judgment, so don’t be unmerciful, unloving, or unjust in your judgment toward far lesser offenses than we have done to God. Be humble (v. 10) not lifting up self to judge others, not undermining God’s law by man’s legalism, not usurping God’s role. There’s only One Judge and Lawgiver and He’s not retiring or looking for replacements, and He doesn’t need advice on His job performance!

Job 40 (NIV) ¹ *The LORD said to Job: ² “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!”* ³ *Then Job answered the LORD: ⁴ “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. ⁵ I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more.”* ⁶ *Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: ⁷ “Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. ⁸ “Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? ⁹ Do you have an arm like God’s, and can your voice thunder like his? ¹⁰ Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. ¹¹ Unleash the fury of your wrath, **look at every proud man and bring him low,** ¹² **look at every proud man and humble him,** crush the wicked where they stand. ¹³ Bury them all in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. ¹⁴ Then **I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.***

¹ “WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE?” by Coach Dave Daubenmire, December 6, 2006, NewsWithViews.com

² *Ibid.*

³ Dave Swavely, *Who are You to Judge? The Dangers of Judging and Legalism*, p. 14.

⁴ Jonathan Edwards. (2000). *Charity and It's Fruits* (electronic ed.). Escondido, CA: The Ephesians Four Group.