

James 4:11-17 –Arrogant Lips

TSK, GreekLexicon, Henry, Rienecker, Gaebelein, Stott, Doriani, Family, Vincent, Trapp, Robertson, Poole, PNT, JFB, Geneva, Clarke, Calvin, INT Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: Some in the church who lusted for possessions welcomed those into the church who were rich but ungodly. At the same time, they ignored the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner, accusing them of many things.

Pride caused this envy and envy brought in nasty friends, one of which was arrogant lips. This is what we will look at today.

Our headings are:

Arrogant Lips: A Warning

Arrogant Lips: An Illustration

Arrogant Lips: A Cure

Our goals are: **That you will learn to guard against arrogant lips, which will even make you stick your finger in God's eyes.**

Arrogant Lips: A warning

11 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.**

1. Apostle James warned Christians not to arrogantly speak evil (bad things) of their brethren.

Immediately it was a warning not to speak evil of widows, orphans, foreigners, and poor, but it applied in general to all Christians. Specifically:

a. They were not to lie about a brother, period. "Speak evil" literally means "slander." For instance, they were not to assume a brother was lazy without knowing the facts and then reporting it as such.

b. They were not to speak things about a brother, even though true, if it would hurt that person. Apostle James knew some had **the tendency to disclose other people's faults to look good!** Maybe the sin of a brother was revealed by bad Christians in order to take revenge on him. But Christians were not to broadcast that sin to the world. **Noah's son Ham was condemned for "broadcasting" his father's sin on the street!**

c. They were not to condemn a brother for smaller or lesser important things - a speck in the eye. (He took Covid vaccine! He didn't take Covid vaccine! He eats bad foods. He eats too much. He celebrates birthdays. He doesn't celebrate birthdays. He had a love marriage. He had an arranged marriage. He eats white flour. He wears expensive clothes. He doesn't. Specks! **A brother is to preserve the honor of another brother if he has committed a small sin.**

Leviticus 19:16 'You **shall not go about as a talebearer** among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

Matthew 7:1 "**Judge not**, that you be not judged.

2. Those who arrogantly lied about others were in fact arrogantly condemning the law – the Law of God.

You see, God's law was grounded on love, so the one who unfairly condemned his innocent brothers was showing contempt for the law. His law was grounded on "hate."

More, the one who **ignored God's was showing contempt for the one who gave the law.**

It is as if here were saying, "The law is wrong!"

Who wants to tell God that his law is wrong?

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

3. Christians had no right to arrogantly condemn others for small things; God is the only ultimate judge.

God is the lawgiver who will judge, not only small matters, but he will judge consciences. God knows absolutely anyone who is breaking his law. God does not want Christians making up their own laws. **These men were trying to force their brothers to live according to "their" wills, but not God's will.**

4. Lessons:

a. God is not against judging! You must humbly make judgments every day. (Matthew 18; 1Timothy 1, 6, Galatians 2) It's a command! Judge who would make a good husband or wife. Elders have to judge in church discipline. Judge if a business is good before you work for it. Judge a politician before you vote for him. Judges must judge every day. **God is warning about attacking others for small things or condemning others for the wrong reasons.**

b. See your sin and then see your wonderful salvation in Jesus Christ. If you do, you wouldn't be arrogant and condemn your brother for small things. You will love him instead.

c. Don't arrogantly condemn someone who is poor, or an orphan, a widow, or a foreigner. You don't know God's plans for his or why he is in that condition. He may be there for a reason. God may raise him up to be a billionaire if it suits his purpose.

Arrogant Lips: An Illustration

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a **vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

1. Those who falsely accused the destitute of laziness, or wastefulness, or sinful lifestyle for their predicament, were arrogantly assuming that those people controlled their future and they also controlled their future. They forgot God's providence! The poor may have been poor because he was sick...or was helping others needier than he! The orphan may have been an orphan because his father were killed in war!

So Apostle James gave an illustration to show those foolish Christians they could not even determine events of their own lives: where they would go, how long they would spend there, and how much money they would make.

Even if these people went to a particular place, they may have had to return home because someone died.

Even if they stayed long, they could be sick and not make a lot of money.

Even if they made money and put all their time in it, their money could be stolen.

They could become poor too...become a widow...and orphan...or a foreigner themselves.

They could not be sure they would live long if they had the best diet and exercise.

They could not be sure if they set out for Jerusalem or Damascus they would get there and not be robbed!

(My great-grand mother died at 103. My grandmother at 83. My father at 43. My sister at 18months. How unpredictable!)

In fact, they could not know what would happen anywhere so they could have no ground for presumptuous lips.

Apostle James reminded them that they did not control the future but **God ruled the world by his providence.**

Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

Psalms 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

He said this to stop their lips from all their false accusations of the widows, orphans, and foreigners!

2. Apostle James further explained that life, in human terms, was unpredictable: Life was like a vapor.

Life was a vapor that appeared and disappeared just as quickly. Yes, we know the sun will rise tomorrow, but vapor lasts only a short time.

Psalms 39:5 Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah

What a knife in the heart this was for those who coveted and fought to include into the church those who were not good but had money! Pride led to envy, and envy to presumptuous lips.

3. Lessons:

a. Knowing the frailty of humanity, there is no ground for arrogance. Young people, take this warning. With your youth, your education, and strength, you might think you can do anything! You can't – at least not without the help of God. **Only God is invincible.** Humble yourself before him!

b. Whenever you make any plans, and you should, (ants do) don't let your planning be arrogant. Ask God to bless your path if your plan is good or block it if it isn't. Never leave God out of your plans. You don't know enough of the future and you don't have the power to control the future. But the one who controls the future loves you! So ask him. And accept any of the 1000 things he ordains to happen. **Remember, your times are in God's hands.** God will do what is best for you. You don't know enough. You are weak. Depend on God.

c. Don't boast about what you accomplish. How silly when proud men boast about doing things they could not guarantee. You can't guarantee your RRSP's. Your money is like steam from a kettle. You can't guarantee your children will be good. You can't guarantee success in business.

Arrogant lips: A Cure

15 Instead you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this** or that."

1. To cure arrogant lips, after showing the shortness and unpredictability of life, Apostle James told Christians to believe and say the right thing: Life depend on God!

More money didn't make them safer. Great jobs didn't make them safer. On God did!

The Muslims, whose god is not real, would say, "Inshah Allah," which means "if god will," and yet these Christians, with the only true God, didn't say that.

Acts 18: 21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; **but I will return again to you, God willing.**" And he sailed from Ephesus.

Nebuchadnezzar thought he was the one who controlled the world because of his great Babylonian Empire. Remember what he had to confess? **Pride, which led to arrogant lips, had to be silenced.**

Daniel 4: 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, **praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.**

16 But now **you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.**

2. God wanted them to set aside their arrogance lips about all they had, all they would have, and all they could do.

17 Therefore, **to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

3. He then gave them a warning that if they didn't submit to God's will and live according to God's will, it was a sin to them.

It was a bad sin because they knew it was wrong but they presumptuously did it.

If they believed in God they would trust in his providence. Sinning this way was contemptible.

4. Lessons:

a. You don't control the future. God does. So make it your regular habit to say, "If the Lord wills."

Don't steal what does not belong to you. If you can sing, who gave you your voice? If you are skilled in computers, who gave you your brain? If you live long, who gave you long life? God!

b. You don't literally have to say "if the Lord wills" every time you plan, but you must mean it!

Humility makes you swim. Pride makes you sink.

c. Pray God will never leave you to your own or to your own abilities. Pray hard. You would be humiliated if you were presumptuous.

d. Providence may throw all your plans into confusion, but if you trust in the Lord, you will know God is always doing what is best for you, his redeemed and adopted children. Keep obeying him!

e. Arrogant lips is a child of envy – one of her firstborn children and a grandchild to pride. What a messed-up family! Get out of that family. Hold on to brothers and sisters who are humble...who serve.

Conclusion:

The warning was clear: Christians were not to be arrogant and condemn others about their lives because Christians couldn't even control their own life or work, or travel. Instead, they were to trust the Lord and his providences.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Assume good about your brothers. Don't slander them by lying or telling things that don't need to be said. They were saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Don't presume the worst. (That's making up your own law!)

2. When you treat your brothers honorably, they will praise God. God will bless you. God's kingdom will grow. Jesus, your Savior, will be glorified.

Finally: It was pride that led to envy that destroyed Adam in the Garden of Eden and brought a death sentence on man. You were cursed with them. To escape that death, you need someone to take your punishment. Jesus did. To make that escape, ask the Father to count the Son's death as yours.