



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 10:02:2010

Website: www.victoriouschristianministry.org

STUDY 34: HUMILITY TOWARDS OTHERS

James 4:11-12

This study focuses on the attitude and relationship of believers towards others (James 4:11; Romans 14:4; Genesis 4:8-9; Numbers 12:1-2; Matthew 7:1-5; Titus 3:1-3; I Peter 2:12). The text warns against evil speaking, defamation of character, slandering, railing, cutting down others and judgmental attitude against brethren since we are members one of another (James 4:11; Ephesians 4:25b). The word 'speak' (James 4:11) has the idea of 'talking down'. Believers are called into a new relationship of humility towards others, manifested in the repudiation of arrogant and critical talk. Even when we discover the errors and sins of others, our primary duty and responsibility is not to publicize it but to labour and prayerfully seek ways of restoring them back to a right relationship with God in a manner similar to that of the good Samaritan (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15-17). Negative criticisms will therefore hinder the achievement of that objective.

In looking at this study, we must bear in mind that James is not against scriptural correction and reproof (2 Timothy 3:16), scriptural rebuking so that believers may be sound in faith (Titus 1:13; 2:15); public rebuke of sin (I Timothy 5:20) and scriptural warnings (Ezekiel 3:17-21). Paul corrected Peter publicly to restore sanity to the church of God (Galatians 2:11-14); Jesus corrected the disciples, rebuked the excesses and ignorance of the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees. John the Baptist reproved Herod and the hypocrisies of the religious Jews. All believers are commanded to restore the erring ones (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15-17). So we need to balance what James is correcting in these scriptures with the entire teaching of God's word otherwise we will err from the truth and make shipwreck of our faith as well as mockery of Christianity. James is focusing here on those whose only pre-occupation in life is fault finding and criticisms, and not those who in obedience to the scriptures corrects with a view to restoration of the erring one to faith as well as of sanity to the Church. History teaches us that society (and church) deteriorates in morals when members keep silence in the face of injustice – often out of fear and ignorance. Note the following quotations:

1. Oppression can only survive through silence – Carmen de Montefores.
2. The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people – Martin Luther King.
3. As we must account for every idle word, so must we account for every idle silence – Benjamin Franklin.
4. What you can tolerate, you can not change – Mike Murdock.

REGARD FOR OTHERS James 4:11; Genesis 4:8-9; 13:8; Romans 14:3,13-15; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:12-13; Romans 8:17; Hebrews 1:14; I Peter 3:7; Luke 10:33,34; I Corinthians 12:13.

People criticize others in a defamatory way so as to exalt themselves. Many there are whose main concern is to criticize, find fault, oppose, destroy or divide Christian believers, fellowships and the Body. Others talk about churches to their fellow men who can do nothing except backbite and devour one another. This is against the Bible precept of considering one another in love as we are brothers and joint heirs

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with Christ (James 4:11; Genesis 13:8). Salvation brings us all together on the same level (Colossians 3:9-14; I Corinthians 12:12,13; Galatians 3:28; I Peter 2:9). In the new creation (II Corinthians 5:17) there is no distinction made in rights and privileges because of race, sex, colour, or position in life. We were dead in trespasses and sins; the same precious blood saved us, in spite of our demerits, against what we deserve. How dare we defame or in any other way hurt or be harsh to a brother or for his sins for which Christ died? We are not only brothers but we are neighbours (James 4:12). A fellow-Christian is not the object of criticism and defamation; he is a neighbour and the object of pastoral care and ministry (Luke 10:33,34). Defamation begins in the mind (Romans 12:2). It is something we say to ourselves about the other person long before we pass it on. Therefore, constantly exercising our minds in biblical attitudes of love for our brethren (Philippians 2:3-5), will replace hurtful defamation with helpful and caring pastoral concern.

Regards for others will move one to prayer in the face of shortcomings. Paul prayed for the local assemblies and for individual Christians before correcting them. He first talked to God about their shortcomings before preaching and writing to set things right (Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 5:25-32). By so doing he set an example for all believers to follow. Our prayers reveal who we are. If we are selfish, our prayers will be centered on personal requests every time we pray. Believers are exhorted to pray for:

- (1) Kings and Rulers (Ezra 6:10; I Timothy 2:14),
- (2) Ministers (Philippians 1:19; I Thessalonians 5:23)
- (3) One another (James 5:16), etc.

It is our duty to pray earnestly and constantly for fellow Christians, our Pastors and Christian teachers, any known Christian worker, national leaders and our nation. We are not called to be critics and judges but to be ambassadors for Christ – reconciling men to God. We are commanded to pray for "all men" (I Timothy 2:1) and to correct them in love (Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 1:16; Romans 1:8-9; 15:30; Colossians 1:3; 4:3; I Thessalonians 1:2; 5:23; Ezra 6:10; I Timothy 2:1-4; Philippians 1:3-4, 19; Hebrews 13:18; James 5:16.).

REGARD FOR THE WORD James 4:11; Isaiah 66:2,5; Acts 7:31-32.

He who speaks against his brother:

- (1) speaks against the word of God, that is to say, he looks upon the word as a precept and breaks it;
- (2) judges the word, that is, one thinks his right of free speech is of greater value than the word of God; and therefore he devalues the word of God;
- (3) is not a doer of the law (word) but a judge. So one is setting himself up against the word as soon as he begins to speak evil against his brother.

REGARD FOR GOD James 4:12.

Since the word reflects the nature of God, a life wrongly related to our fellows exposes a life wrongly related to God. If a believer was truly and insistently walking humbly with God, then he could not fly proudly in the face of His (God's) word and defame his brother. But if we do thus defame him, the failure is in the heavenly relationship before it has appeared in the earthly. Furthermore, it is a thing for serious and sober reflection that **there is one lawgiver and judge**, for it is none other than **he who is able to save and to destroy** (James 4:12a). Man has no right to usurp this authority (James 4:12b).

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