

# Doers Not Judges

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[ 0 : 00 ] We have been in a series through the book of James for the last couple of months.

It's been a great series, lots of practical applications for theology and God's word that we've been going through. And today we are going to be going through what it looks like to avoid judgment and condemnation of our fellow brothers and sisters.

We're going to be in James chapter four, verses 11 through 12. From our text today, there's three principles, three truths that I want us to see. The first is that judgment is a violation of the two greatest commands.

Second one is that we are to be doers of the law and not judges of the law. And the third and final one is that there is only one who can truly judge.

This is a very powerful passage for me to study this week. So I feel like there's a lot of just hands-on application for how we deal with each other as a church body and as fellow people that are struggling with sin still.

[ 1 : 22 ] And we're going to look at one of my favorite doctrines to teach on, which is the doctrine of justification. And I hope that that will be a message of hope for everyone. But if you would, let's stand together and read our text today.

We're going to be in James chapter four, verses 11 through 12. Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.

There is only one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

This is the word of the Lord, church. You all may have a seat. So the first truth that we're going to look at today is that judgment is a violation of the two greatest commands.

[ 2 : 20 ] Now, when we hear the word law, just from a biblical perspective, we a lot of times go to Leviticus or the Pentateuch.

I mean, these were things that James's audience of Jewish believers would have been very familiar with. But Jesus, you know, never seeking to dismantle the law, he was a fulfillment of that law. He summed it up in two great commands, which was to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

And the second one was to love your neighbor as yourself. These are two commands that I pray over my children every night. And it's a good way that you can just pray scripture of your children. That's just kind of a side note there. But everything in the law and the prophets that's in the Old Testament falls into one of these two categories to love the Lord and to love your neighbor as yourself.

[ 3 : 19 ] It's interesting because you can't do one without the other. It's not a you choose one and then you choose the other. It is a both and issue.

You're not going to be able to love people properly unless you first have a proper love for the Lord. But also the same is true. You're not going to love people properly if you don't have a proper love for the Lord.

So the two are directly connected with each other. Now, on to our first point here is that when we judge and speak evil, we don't love our neighbor as ourself. Now, I'll say this, that it's easy for us to try and justify the way we speak about one another, because a lot of times the way that we speak is tied to our feelings.

And in today's culture, feelings are what matter to everyone. So we think that we're justified by our feelings. We try to paint someone else out as worse than ourselves.

And we try to paint ourselves as being on some moral high ground or self-righteous pedestal. You know, we can think, well, of course, I would never do anything that bad.

[ 4 : 24 ] Well, yeah, I know that I'm a sinner in need of grace, but not as much grace as that person needs. I mean, I think that at some point in all of our lives, we've all found ourselves in a situation like that.

But the truth is that grace and compassion, that's what makes this whole fellowship possible. First of all, it's the grace and forgiveness that Christ has shown us when he established this church and left it behind for us to be part of his body.

And then second, the grace and compassion that we show to one another, where we put up with each other's shortcomings like we all have. Forbearance, forgiveness. Love for our neighbor is supposed to reflect the love that Christ first had for us.

It's the kind of love that we want to be shown by our Savior. Here's the issue, though. The problem is that culture has adopted this view of disagreement and confrontation as, I don't know, hate speech.

I think that's a term now that everyone's using, hate speech. Society has taken this truth in scripture that, you know, we are not to judge and twisted into being, well, we just need to be ignorant of people's sins.

[ 5 : 46 ] We don't really need to notice other people's shortcomings. We don't need to notice what they're struggling with. We just need to mind our own business. And I'll tell you, I have talked to a lot of people that do not believe, but it seems like all of them can quote at least one of these two passages.

It's just with this mindset of, I don't want to be judged and held accountable for my sins.

That could not be farther from the truth, from what scripture says. If you are a brother or sister in Christ, we are called to hold each other accountable for the sins that we commit.

Not as a form of punishment, and we'll get into that here in a minute. But how do we confront a brother or a sister that's in sin? And how do we do it without judging?

And is it contradictory to what the Bible tells us to do? Again, I want to say that it is not. I want us to go to Galatians chapter 6, verses 1 through 5.

[ 7 : 03 ] Starting in verse 1 in Galatians 6. Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you be tempted too. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks that he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.

Unrighteous judgment is the denial of Jesus' desire for mercy. When we confront a brother or sister, it needs to be from a place of mercy.

Desiring reconciliation. This is really the whole basis for church discipline. It's not to punish someone for sin, but to hold each other accountable with the goal of restoration.

[ 8 : 17 ] Some might think, well, that doesn't sound fun. I'm not going to lie. Most churches do not practice biblical church discipline. I've served at several churches in the state, and very few of them touch on this subject or teach on it.

But it is an essential part of being part of the body of Christ. Just to give you an example, how many of you would say that the best way to love your children is just to take off the reins and to let them do whatever they want?

Yeah. Just to give you an example, if my kids were left up to their own devices during flu season, they'd be like, Flu? I want to fly. I'm going to go lick every doorknob in this town. It's going to be great. Or I'm going to go stick my finger in every single electrical socket.

That is a daily struggle at my house, by the way. But just taking the reins off, that is not the best way to love our children. There's boundaries. There's rules. There's an expectation of things that we are supposed to be doing.

And it's the same thing in our church. To just take off the reins and be blind to everyone else's sins. That's not what God has called us to do.

[ 9 : 27 ] And that's not how we love each other. The Bible says that we speak the truth in love to one another. So confrontation. Not necessarily confrontation, but confronting somebody with their sin.

It's not an act of judgment. It's not an act of condemnation. If you do it in the right heart. It's what God calls us to do. It's what it means to bear each other's burdens. To hold each other up in our weaknesses.

The next thing, as far as the laws that were being violated here. When we judge and speak evil of our brothers and sisters. We don't love the Lord as we should.

We do not love him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus made it very clear. In John chapter 13, verse 35. He said, By this, all people will know that you are my disciples.

If you have love for one another. Same author, John, later wrote in his epistle to the churches in Ephesus. First John chapter 2, verse 9.

[ 10 : 33 ] It says, Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. There is a very clear connection here.

Between a right standing with God. And a proper love for God's people. You can't say, Well, I love God. But you can't stand his church. That's like going to Christ and saying, Christ, I want all the benefits that come with being your child.

But I want nothing to do with your bride. If somebody came up and said that to me. Like, Tyler, I like you. I think you're a swell guy. But I can't stand Nicole.

And I want nothing to do with her. That's not going to go over very well with me. But a lot of times, that's how we approach our relationship with Christ. We want all the benefits of being a Christian.

But we want nothing to do with the bride of Christ. His church. The laws in Leviticus. Again, what we were talking about earlier. That this audience that James is writing to would have been familiar with.

[ 11 : 35 ] Leviticus 19.16. It says, You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people. You shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.

King David wrote in Psalm chapter 15. O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly.

And does what is right. And speaks truth in his heart. Who does not slander with his tongue. And does no evil to his neighbor. Nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

So there's a very clear relationship and connection. With our relationship with God. And our relationship with his people.

You can't have one without the other. And ultimately this drive to tear down our brothers and sisters. It's a desire to think more highly of ourselves than we should.

[ 12 : 33 ] To see ourselves as more moral than our peers. It's really the root of it. It's pride. And when you get down to sin. The root of it. It's pride. It's our own misconception.

That somehow. In our own strength. We have managed to throw off the shackles of our sin by ourselves. Rather than having to be rescued from it. That's really the danger of pride.

That's why Paul says not to think of himself more highly. Than he ought to think. That's Romans 12.3. Because pride is always going to blind us.

To how grace has redeemed us. So when we've forgotten about grace. The grace that has been shown to us. When we've lost sight of the tremendous debt that we have been forgiven.

Our love for God. Grows cold. And one of the symptoms of a cold love for God. Will always be the devaluing of his people. Those that are made in his image.

[ 13 : 39 ] One of the implications that we can take from this though. From this first point. Is that there's nothing that fractures church unity. Faster than speaking evil.

And unrighteous judgment of our brothers and sisters. Just like James. Paul was keenly aware of these possible barriers. He addressed it in almost all of his letters. This issue of church unity.

Our speech towards one another. Has the potential to bring healing and life. Or create fractures. And handicap the body of Christ. Christ. Ephesians 4.29.

Paul says this. To let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths. But only such as is good for building up. As fits the occasion. That it may give grace.

To those who hear. So is the way that we are talking to each other. Is it showing grace? Or is it showing condemnation? When we see a brother or sister that's caught in sin.

[ 14 : 38 ] Do our words. Show a desire for mercy. And reconciliation. Or do they show condemnation? Second truth that we had talked about.

Was that we are to be doers of the law. And not judges of the law. The law was given to God's people. To teach them how to live.

In a covenant relationship with the Lord. To train them for sanctification. The law was given to be followed. Not as a means of self-righteousness.

But to teach the people how to be obedient. To the Lord. Too often. Back then with the Pharisees. And the Sadducees. And even today. The law is used as a stick.

To beat other people with. Pharisees. Other Jews. Even Christians today. We become more concerned. About condemning those who break the law of God.

[ 15 : 41 ] Than living by it ourselves. We need to be more concerned with our own sanctification. Matthew 7. Verses 1 through 6. I kind of quoted a little bit of this early.

And I'm not going to read the whole passage to you. But this is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Where Jesus is telling his followers. To first take out the plank in your own eye. Before you worry about the speck in your brother's eye.

Now again. Jesus is not saying to be ignorant of other people's sin issues. That's not what he's saying at all. He's given us his word. To be able to judge between righteousness. And sinfulness. But what he is saying. Is that we need to be concerned about our sanctification. Sanctification. Are we following Christ? Are we looking out for our own relationship with the Lord. Before we seek to go pointing out other people's faults.

It's a very easy trap to fall into. But when we take it upon ourselves to condemn. And this is the difference between righteous judgment and condemnation.

[ 16 : 41 ] Righteous judgment for us as Christians. Is leading to restoration. That is our goal. That's the goal of church discipline. But. When it becomes unrighteous judgment. Is when it turns into condemnation.

When we seek to tear other people down. Rather than lead them back into a right standing with the Lord. When we do that. We have done what James has described here. As becoming judges. Of the law ourselves. Second Corinthians. Says that God has given to us. The ministry of reconciliation. That should always be our goal. You know.

One of the things that I. I've had some experience with. Is being in a courtroom. When we were foster parents. We were all the time. Going back and forth to the courthouse. To hear updates on our children's cases.

And. One side of the courtroom. They always try to do this early. But they have a. Kind of a loft. Where they bring in people that have already been convicted.

[ 17 : 40 ] They've got their orange jumpsuits on. And they're over there in the corner. And the judge is reviewing all their cases. They try to get those done first. But one thing that really stands out.

Is when the judge enters. What happens when the judge enters the courtroom? All rise. Now this isn't out of reverence for the judge.

Necessarily. Because no one is beyond fault. But it's for what the judge represents. The judge represents the law. That all of us as American citizens. Talking about the human law now.

But all of us as American citizens. Are bound by. And any judgment that he makes. Any authority that he wields. Is an extension of that law. Not of his personal preference.

But of the law. And he's expected to be able to do this without bribery. He's expected to perform his duties above reproach. So people stand out of reverence. For that position.

[ 18 : 36 ] Now just. Going back to this example of sinners. Becoming judges. What do you think would happen? If the judge came in.

Everybody rose. They sit down. And the judge is looking over the cases. And he hears all the evidence. And he grabs his gavel. And he's about to announce his verdict. But then one of the orange jumpsuit convicts.

Stands up. And walks up to the podium. Grabs the gavel. And says. You know what judge? It's okay. I got this. I'm going to interpret the law for you. And I'm going to make the judgments here. What do you think would happen?

My hope is. As a tax paying American citizen. That this guy would be tased. And put back in his loft. Another good example.

Traffic court. If anyone's ever been to traffic court before. How do you think that the people present would respond. If the judge came in in a hurry. And he said. I just wanted to apologize for being late for traffic court.

[ 19 : 36 ] I had to run three red lights to get here. And sped. But it's okay. I was careful. Because I was under the influence. So I tried to make sure I was paying attention to all the details. How do you

think people would respond to that?

In the same way though. We do the exact same thing. When sinful people. Seek to be the judge. Jury and executioner of God's laws. That's not a position that we were meant to hold.

And again. I just. I want to reiterate this. It's not being ignorant of sin. It's not allowing sin to go unchecked. Within our body. But it's how we approach it.

Hebrews describes the word of God. As a sword. That's living and active. Able to divide to the deepest point. And despite this description as a weapon.

We know that the word of God. Is an instrument. Of restoration. When it pierces us to the heart. We see our sin for what it is.

[ 20 : 40 ] And hopefully we come in repentance to the Lord. But again. Too often we use the sword as a weapon of destruction. To beat down the lost.

To guilt trip those that are in. That are struggling with sin in our church. Church. One of the things that we need to take away from this though.

Is that making ourselves judges. It also does not reflect God's. Desire. For the lost. Ezekiel 18. 23. Says. Have I any pleasure. In the death of the wicked. Declares the Lord God. And not rather that he should turn. From his way and live. Church.

God does not desire. The condemnation of sinners. And to be clear. God is going to be glorified. In whatever facet of his character. He chooses to show.

[ 21 : 38 ] If it's mercy. His righteousness. Will be glorified. If it's wrath. His righteousness is still glorified. God has that right.

And no matter what part of his character. He shows. It is completely holy. And he is completely just. In doing that. But as people. Who have experienced. The mercies of the Lord. We should desire mercy.

Just like God does. Unfortunately though. When the church decides. That condemnation. Has become their cry. What we do.

Is we push the lost away. Or. When a brother or sister. Is struggling in sin. They reproach. From the church. That's a sad thing to do.

I always tell people. If you are struggling with sin. The church is the best place. For you to be. The church should be a beacon of light. For those that are struggling hard. With their sinful nature.

[ 22 : 37 ] Like all of us are. But too often. The church becomes a warning light. To stay away. Until you get yourself together. God never calls us.

To get ourselves together. God calls us. To trust in Christ. To make us right. Before him. Something that we need to remember.

About sin too. And this really puts things. Into perspective. Our sin. Is first and foremost. Against the holiness of God. While our sin.

May affect those that are around us. That much is clear. I mean the law. Talks about this. That our sins. Affect the people around us. And we should seek. Forgiveness. From those that are affected by it.

But first and foremost. Our sin. Is a transgression. Against God. And his holiness. David. In Psalm 51. Made this proclamation. He said. Against you.

[ 23 : 31 ] And you alone. Have I sinned. Until we come to a realization. Of who it is. That we have sinned against. We're never going to have. A true appreciation.

Of just how enormous. The debt was. That we have been forgiven. And what grace has done for us. Once we realize this. Our call to those.

Who are lost in sin. Or to someone struggling. That might be slipping away. Will never be a call of condemnation. But a call for restoration. The last thing.

Was in verse. Verse. 12. In James chapter 4. This is our last truth here. There is only. One. Who can truly judge. I want to read verse 12. To you all again. There is only one lawgiver.

And judge. Who is able to save. And to destroy. But who are you. To judge your neighbor. Isaiah.

[ 24 : 30 ] Chapter 33. He firmly established. God as our judge. He said. For the Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. And he will save us.

Why is God the only true judge? Because he's the only one. Who can truly judge. Without hypocrisy. He is the righteous standard.

That we have fallen short of. The law was meant. To reflect his character. And he alone. Can cast judgment. And condemnation. For transgressing against that. God's judgment.

Has all the authority. Which for someone. Living in active rebellion. Or planning to rebel. This should be a sobering. Reality check. Jesus reminded his disciples. Of this when he was trying. To encourage their obedience. In the midst of difficult trials. He said in Matthew 10. 28. Do not fear those. Who kill the body. But cannot kill the soul.

[ 25 : 25 ] Rather fear him. Who can destroy. Both soul and body. In hell. As the righteous judge. God holds all the power.

For our eternity. In his hands. And this is good news. Because while God. Is the only one. Who can condemn. And judge us. He is also the only one.

That can offer us. Mercy. And justify us. And that is. Freely given. To all who call. In the name of the Lord. This really goes into. The doctrine of justification.

I was excited. Whenever I saw this. Come up in the text. But. Justification. Is a term. That means to make right. Just simply put. It means to make something right. There's lots of things.

That we can justify. In our lives. As a martial arts instructor. I was able to justify. Plenty of occasions. For the use of physical force. In the case of self-defense. For any of you.

[ 26 : 22 ] That are in law enforcement. I'm sure that you can justify. Almost any law. That you are seeking. To uphold. As a law enforcement officer. We're making these things right. By explaining the benefit.

That they have. But. How is something. That is inherently wrong. Someone like. A sinner. That's completely guilty.

How are they justified? How do we make them right? Wayne Grudem. He defines.

Justification. As this. And this is probably. One of my favorite. Explanations of it. Says. It's an instantaneous. Legal act. Of God. In which. He thinks.

Of our sins. As for. Forgiven. And Christ's. Righteousness. As belonging. To us. And declares. Us to be righteous. In his sight. Church.

[ 27 : 18 ] That's good news. I mean. For us to have. A righteousness. That is not. Our own. Because. To be clear. All we bring. To the table. Is guilt. But Christ.

Brings a righteousness. That we can put on. For ourselves. And that God. Can claim. As our own. And this is possible. Through faith. In Romans. 5. 1. It says. Therefore. Since we have been.

Justified. By faith. We have. Peace. With God. Through our Lord. Jesus Christ. Here's why God. Can do this church. The same God. That demands. Justice. That is the absolute. Standard of righteousness. God. He is also.

He is also. The same God. That became. Flesh for us. He is the same God. That made atonement.

For our sins. That he demands. Justice for. And he can declare.

[ 28 : 14 ] Us. Righteous. And our sins. Forgiven. Without contradicting. His need for justice. He is the only judge. That can do that. And once our debt.

Has been paid. By fully trusting. In the sacrifice. Of Christ. We now have a righteousness. Not of our own making. But a perfect righteousness. That is given to us.

By a perfect. Savior. If you're here today. And you're not a believer. First of all.

I'm so glad. That you're here. We want you all. Here in our church. Hearing the gospel. Thank you for coming. But if you've never. Been justified.

If you've never placed. Your faith. In Jesus Christ. It's not too late. Justification. Is still possible.

Through faith in Christ. And my hope.

[ 29 : 12 ] Is that through scripture. I've been able to make clear. What Christ has done for you. So that you can be. His child. And the truth is.

We've all sinned. All of us have. Believers. We have all been justified. We have all been forgiven. Of an eternal debt. Romans makes that clear.

But in God's righteousness. He has made a way for us. To receive mercy. He has made a way for us. To be made right. Before him. And one day.

We are going to stand. Before a judgment throne. Church. That is a promise. That we can hold to. In scripture. Is that one day. God is going to call. Everything to account. And the only hope.

That we have. Is that Christ. Is going to speak. On our behalf. The same God. Who sits on the throne. Of judgment.

[ 30 : 12 ] Is the same God. Who has established. The path for salvation. And righteousness. And if he is calling you today. Please don't delay. Pastor Eric.

Is going to be up here. Receiving people. If you have questions. About any of this. Catch me after the service. Because I would love. To answer any questions. That you have about this. So would Pastor Eric.

So would any of our. Sunday school teachers. Or our elders. So please reach out. To one of us. Before we close. Our time together today. I want to close. With the scripture. It's probably my favorite passage.

In the book of Romans. It's Romans chapter 8. Starting in verse 33. It says this.

Who shall bring. Any charge. Against God's elect. It is God. Who justifies. Who is to. To condemn. Christ Jesus.

[ 31 : 10 ] Is the one who died. And more than that. Who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who indeed. Is interceding. For us. Who shall separate us.

From the love of Christ. Shall tribulation. Or distress. Or persecution. Or famine. Or nakedness. Or danger. Or sword. As it is written. For your sake.

We are being killed. All day long. We are regarded. As sheep. To be slaughtered. No. In all these things. We are more than conquerors. Through him.

Who loved us. For I am sure of this. That neither. Death. Nor life. Nor angels. Nor rulers. Nor things present.

Nor things to come. Nor powers. Nor height. Nor depth. Nor anything else. In creation. Will be able to separate us. From the love of God. In Christ Jesus.

[ 32 : 06 ] Our Lord. No matter what sin. You are guilty of. If Christ is the one. Interceding for you. You have hope.

And that is my prayer. For you all this morning. To be justified. Before the Lord. Respond to his gospel call. And call in the name of the Lord. So that you can be saved. Let's pray.

Father. We thank you. That you have established. A path. For us. To be able to be saved. Lord. So that our sins. Could not be counted against us. Lord. We thank you. For the atoning sacrifice.

That your son Jesus. Has made for us.

Lord. So that our sins. Could be forgiven. And his righteousness. Could be ours. A righteousness. That we could never earn. On our own. Lord. You are a good.

[ 33 : 06 ] And faithful judge. Lord. We thank you. That when we call on your name. That we can be saved. And that is my prayer. This morning. Lord. That there is somebody here. That has never called on your name.

That has never trusted. In Christ's atoning work. Or that they would come to him. Rely completely. On his sacrifice. And call on your name. So that they can be saved.

And have hope for eternity. Lord. We thank you. For all these things. And we pray for all these things. In Jesus name. Amen.