

## CCC HOW TO QUIT PLAYING GOD P11

### Developing a Faith That Works - Part 11

#### James 4:11-12

Back in the 1960's there was a famous book written by Eric Burn called Games People Play. A couple of years later another book came out called, Games Christians Play. It was an interesting book that dealt with games Christians play in the name of Jesus and of those games the deadliest game was the game of playing God. Listen to what James tells us in 11 and 12, "*Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, [God] the one who is able to save and destroy. But you -- who are you to judge your neighbor?*" James says the way **we're playing God when**

**we judge people.** Anytime I judge you, anytime you judge me, we're playing God and when you judge someone your actually judging the Law you're not keeping it, but your sitting in judgment on it] It's God's and only God's responsibility to judge other people.

Today, were going to look at four things:

Why we like to judge other people,

Why should I not judge others,

When is it wrong to judge other people, and

How do you break the habit of judging other people? This

I do know, if you learn how to deal with this issue of judging, you'll be a lot happier a person.

**Why Do We Like To Judge Others?** - Romans 2:3 "*So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them, and yet do the same thing, do you think you will escape God's judgment?*" Paul says that one of the reason's we tend to

judge others **is to excuse my own faults**. You think by pointing the finger at somebody else, God is going to forget what you've done, or when you point out how somebody else has fallen then you don't look so bad. We use it as an excuse to blame others. We love to accuse others and excuse ourselves.

How do we do that? How do we excuse our sins? We do that by relabeling them... "I'm not a gossip, I'm just sharing a concern," or "I'm not lazy, I'm just mellow," or "I'm not negative, I'm realistic," or "I'm not unreliable, I'm flexible." We have different terminology. We excuse our sins by relabeling them. "I'm not critical, I'm discerning." We all do that.

There is another reason James tells us that we tend to judge other people and that's **because it appeals to our pride**. Proverbs 26:22 (GN) "*Gossip is so tasty. How we*

*love to swallow it.*" It's like we eat it with great relish.

Think about it... Why is it, when somebody is gossiping, usually we are all ears! We just can't wait to hear what's being said. Why is that..? There is a natural innate ability of gossip or slander that captures our curiosity and its sin, it's the sin of judging other people. God's word, the bible says you will deal with temptation more in your Christian life than possibly any other sin. It's a self- righteous attitude of putting other people down; it's a self- righteous attitude of being critical, being judgmental and Jesus condemned it more any other sin.

There are many different kinds of slander. There's slander in the first degree, you say something like, "Do you know what that guy's doing, then you share a statement of judgment on them. But what Christians like to do is called slander in the second degree – Sally, I need to share this

with you so you can pray about it with me." Do you know what Pastor Bill is doing? If you're not careful, a prayer chain can turn into a gossip grapevine very quickly.

## **WHY SHOULD I NOT JUDGE OTHERS**

James gives us three reasons:

**It's unchristian** - v. 11 *"Brothers, do not slander one another... anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law."* Circle the word, "slander". The word "slander" and the word "devil" are the same word. The word "devil" means slander. The Bible calls Satan the accuser of Christians. He's the slanderer of Christians. The devil's number one activity is going around and putting people down, trying to discredit people, trying to slander them, malign them, smear them. We are the most like the devil when we are slandering someone or something. When we speak against somebody

else we're doing the devil's work for him. That's what the devil's job description is. John 8:44 says, *"The devil is the father of lies."* Revelation says he's the "accuser of brothers." It's unchristian to judge others. Why should I not judge others:

**2. It's unloving** - We shouldn't judge others because it's unloving, vs. 11 says *"...who judges speaks against the Law..."* What law is it I'm breaking? He's mentioned it earlier the Royal Law. James 2:8 *"If you really keep the Royal Law found in Scripture love your neighbor as yourself."* James says if you do this you're doing right, but if I judge, I'm breaking the Royal Law -- the law of love -- *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* Why should I not judge others:

**3. It's unjustified** - *"There's only one lawgiver and one judge."* The word "lawgiver" is used six times in the Old

Testament and once in the New Testament. The six times in the Old Testament it refers to God. The same thing here -- it's referring to God. Only God has the right to judge.

It's in God's job description, not in yours as a Christian. He has not commissioned you to talk to everybody about everybody else.

### III. WHEN IS IT WRONG TO JUDGE OTHERS?

There are seven places in Scripture where it says it is wrong to judge. If you want to know what you can judge here it is: we're to judge ourselves, and we're to judge certain matters of our life. But there's seven times that God's word, the bible says, don't judge.

1. Romans 2:1-3 *"You therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else. For at whatever point you judge others you're condemning yourself for you who pass judgment do the same thing. Now we know that*

*God's judgment on those who do such things is based on truth, so when you a mere man pass judgment on them and yet you do the same thing, do you think you'll escape God's judgment?"* What's this scripture is basically saying is **when is it wrong to judge other people, when I'm practicing the same sin.** I don't have any right to speak up, if I lack the personal integrity, I'm guilty too.

Remember the woman caught in adultery? What did Jesus say to the Pharisees? *"He who is without sin cast the first stone."* They all walked away. That's what God is saying here. I don't have any right to judge anyone else if I'm guilty of the same thing. We need to be consistent.

2. Matthew 7:3-5 *"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye' when there's a plank*

*in your own eye. You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye and then you can see clearly to remove the speck in your brother's eye."* Jesus is using some Hebrew humor here -- humor by exaggeration. Jesus is making a point to you and I here with humor. He's saying **it's wrong to judge when it blinds me to my own faults**. In other words judging will causes you and me not look at ourselves realistically, so then it's wrong. Christians can if not careful become nitpicking of others while their eye has a log in it.

3. John 7:24 gives us the third time in scripture when it's wrong to judge other people. *"Jesus says, 'Stop judging by mere appearance and make a right judgment.'"* **It's wrong to judge others when you draw conclusions based on outward appearance**. We tend to make our impressions of people in about the first 15 seconds and most of that is in the way that they look. We judge people,

we size them up, their face, their clothing, hairdo, what they drive. If you judge others just on the basis of appearance, that's unwise, you would have missed Jesus. I Samuel 16:7. Samuel said this when he chose David, "the runt of the family is to be king of Israel." Others were saying, "Not David! That scrawny little kid! He's nothing. Samuel said, "God doesn't look at the appearance. God looks at the heart."

4. John 7:51 *"Nicodemus who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number asked (talking to the Sanhedrin) 'Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?'"* The obvious answer is "no". **It's wrong to judge somebody before you hear the facts**. There is always more than one side to a story. There are three sides to a story: your side, their side and God's side.

5. Colossians 2:16 *"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat, drink, or regard to religious festivals, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things to come. Reality, however, is found in Christ."* Paul is saying it is wrong to judge people, their spirituality, basis of externals religious observances. You **can't** tell a person's walk with God based on their outward external observances -- by what you eat or drink or if you worship on Saturday or Sunday. Reality is found in Christ. When I judge somebody on the basis of their outward religious observances I'm missing the point.

6. James 4:11 *"Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it."* If I judge you and the law has already said, "Don't do it," What I am saying is I'm more important than the law and therefore I am putting

myself above the law. I'm the law from now on. I'm the judge of all things. **It's wrong to judge when it causes you to speaking evil about another Christian.** Anything that causes me to speak evil about another Christian, that maybe ruins their reputation, is wrong. God's word says we are to hate wrong but we're to love people even when they are doing wrong. Ephesians 4:29 says we're always to speak positively, speak only those things that build up and encourage. Christians ought to be known for their encouragement not their criticism. People don't need nagging; they need encouragement. People know what's right, we just need encouragement them to do it. It's my prayer that I would be known as an encourager. I think that's what God wants us all to be.

7. I Corinthians 4:5 *"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will*

*bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts."* Circle the word, "nothing"

To understand this you have to understand the verses around it. What is Paul talking about? He's talking about motives. Everywhere Paul went his motives were constantly being challenged, questioned. He is saying **we have no right to judge other people's motives and question why they do what they do.** He says, *"wait until the Lord comes."* It's premature to judge people's motives. Why is it premature? Nobody really knows what's in somebody else's heart. You can guess but you don't know. To judge somebody means we're judging without all the facts. Only God has the right to judge because he can see in the heart. The Bible says that someday when the Lord comes back, *"he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's heart."* I

have a hard enough time just trying to figure out my own motives about a lot of things, much less making a good guess at yours and so do you. A lot of times we don't know why we do what we do. So tell me, what makes us think we can figure out what makes other people do what they do?

## **HOW DO YOU BREAK THE HABIT OF JUDGING OTHERS**

**1. Remember that I'll be judged by the same standards that I use to judge other people.**

If you want something to help you be a little more considerate, look at Matthew 7:1-2 *"Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you, for God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others"*

**2. Remember that each of us is accountable to God.**

*"Every one of us, then, will have to give an account of himself to God. So then, let us stop judging one another."*

### **3. Remember how much God has been merciful to me.**

James 2:13 *"Mercy triumphs over judgement."* There is a principle greater than criticism. It's the principle of forgiveness, the principle of mercy. Jesus said, *"Blessed are the merciful."* The Bible says we're to be merciful because God has given us so much mercy. The reason why I have to be patient with you is because God is patient with me. The reason you have to be patient with me is because God is patient with you. I have to learn to forgive you because He has forgiven me. You have to forgive me because He has forgiven you. That's the way it goes. None of us get what we deserve. If we did we wouldn't be here today. It's all by God's grace.

But, we all take advantage of God's grace. We forget how good His grace is. When you first become a Christian you understand how much you're forgiven. You can feel it. It's the most thrilling experience and you're really grateful for it. The longer you're a Christian, the more you take it for granted. Kind of like the boss who gives everybody in the company a \$350 Christmas bonus. Everybody praises the boss. The second year he decides to do it again -- a second \$350. By the third Christmas you've already spent the money and thinking "What is he going to do this year?" If he didn't give it you'd be upset. We become conditioned to be ungrateful. What am I saying; if God's been gracious with us we need to be gracious with others. I have found out that the most forgiving person is the most forgiven person. Some of the people I feel closest to in our church are people who have fallen the hardest. Why those people,

because they aren't trying to pretend they are somebody they're not, they realize it's only by God's grace. Once you've fallen, once you made mistakes, realized it and faced up to it and if you do that you'll be a lot more sympathetic, a lot more open and forgiving, kind and loving with other people, because you faced it also.

**Prayer:** - This is an area that every one of us have to deal with -- a critical attitude, being judgmental. If you want to find some fault in somebody you can. Everybody is imperfect. It's all in what you decide to look at. If you choose to make friends in life one of the things you have to do is overlook their faults. Love the good parts in them and overlook the bad parts. If you want to have a successful marriage you have to learn to stop criticizing and questioning your mate's motives. Look at the good parts in their life. Yes, work on the bad in both of your

lives. Why do we spend an entire Sunday Morning just on this? Because it's one of the most common problems.

James says it's really playing God. Only God has the right to judge, evaluate and criticize someone. He's got all the facts. He's impartial. We're not. It's not our place. It will be a liberating experience when you realize that God has not called you to judge other people but He's called you to be accountable to Him.

Would you pray a prayer like this in your heart, "Lord, help me to quit playing God. Help me this week to not be critical and judgmental, to watch my mouth and not gossip and pass on damaging information, but to build up others and to share only those things that encourage and lift up. Lord, thank You for your grace in my life. Thank You that You don't give me what I deserve but You give me what I need. Help me to do that to others, to pass on to them what they need. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."