

# THE SIN OF PRIDE (1): SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

*James 4:11,12*

## Introduction

- Three areas about proud behaviour James would like to speak about:
  1. Our behaviour in relation to our judgment and thought of others (4:11,12).
  2. Our behaviour in relation to how we order our lives and plan (4:13-17).
  3. Our behaviour in relation to stewarding the world's resources and goods entrusted to us by God (5:1-6).
- Definition: To speak evil means to slander or defame someone when he is not there to defend himself.
- The same word is used in 2 Cor 12:20 as slander.
- Dictionary definition of slander: An attack on the reputation of someone by publishing falsely and maliciously things that slander and injure.
- It can be false or true about someone character, but the intent is to harm (Gen. 3:4).
- The sin of slander is very serious and is condemned all through the Bible (Psa 50:20; 101:5; Prov 6:16-19; Rom 1:30; 2 Cor 12:20; 1 Pet 2:1).

## 1. The wrong way we judge our neighbour (relationship with others), v.11a.

- Speaking evil against one's brother = judging (condemning) one's brother.
- It is a breach of the royal law that we should love our neighbour *as ourselves*.
- The relationship of brethren puts us all on the same level.
- Neighbours belong together in the love which manifests itself in mutual care and concern.
- To judge another is to assume to have the same authority as the Word of God. Hence, to talk down on another.
- Our Lord's definition of neighbourliness in the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25ff) leaves no room for talking down.
- It does not mean that we are forbidden to expose sin.
- Judging is both commanded (Lk 12:57) and forbidden in Scripture.
- This is an important point: Tolerance has been held as the highest virtue in today's culture – much higher than integrity, truth or holiness. People don't like to be criticized.
- Clear instruction on how we should deal with a brother who sins against us (Mat 18:15-17).
- Clear instruction to deal with a brother who have sinned publicly (Gal 2:11-14).
- John Calvin: "This example (Gal 2:11-14) instructs us that those who have sinned publicly must be publicly chastised, as far as the church is concerned. The

purpose is that their sin may not, by remaining unpunished, form a dangerous example.”

## **2. the wrong way we see and treat the law (relationship with the law), v. 11b.**

- When we slander a brother, we break the royal law of love meant to be obeyed.
- Rom 13:8, “*Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*”
- We judge the law unworthy of our attention and set ourselves up as knowing better than the law, we ‘judge the law’.
- Every sin is a sin of pride because we say, “I know what God said, but I am not subject to what God said. I am in charge.”
- We reject our position as under the authority of the law and take a position above the law.

## **3. The wrong way we regard God (relationship with God), v. 12a.**

- There is already One (God the Father) who has the authority to give law, there is no room for another.
- God is both the lawgiver and the law-applier, He is able to save and to destroy. Deuteronomy 32:39, “*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.*”
- When we disobey the law, we are insulting the only one Author of that law, and are speaking evil of Him for having instituted that law.
- To disobey God’s law is to contradict Him (the law is the expression of who and what He is).
- To value our opinions above the law is to value ourselves above Him.
- All sin violates God’s law and set the sinner above the law, therefore, strikes a murderous blow at God Himself.

## **4. The wrong way we judge and think about ourselves, v. 12b.**

- None of us is without sin.
- But here we are trying to prove ourselves superior to our brethren.
- God has promised to exalt us so let Him exalt us, not ourselves.

## **Conclusion.**

- Why slander out of all pride? It is a common sin, a respectable sin.
- It breaks the ninth commandment.
- All sins (big or small) are about putting ourselves above others, above the law and ultimately above God.
- Ralph Venning wrote: “The sinfulness of sin not only appears from, but consists in this, that it is contrary to God. Indeed, it is contrary and enmity itself. Carnal men,

or sinners are called by the name of enemies of God (Romans 5:8,10; Colossians 1:21); but the carnal mind or sin is called enmity itself (Romans 8:7). Accordingly, it and its acts are expressed by names of enmity and acts of hostility, such as walking contrary to God (Leviticus 26:21), rebelling against God (Isaiah 1:2), rising up against him as an enemy (Micah 2:8), striving and contending with God (Isaiah 45:9), and despising God (Number 11:20). It makes men haters of God (Romans 1:30), resisters of God (Acts 7:51), fighters against God (Acts 5:39 and 23:9), even blasphemers of God, and in short very atheists, who say there is no God (Psalm 14:1). It goes about to ungod God, and is by some of the ancients called Deicidium, God murder or God-killing.”

- Sin is God murderer. We all crucified and murdered Christ on the cross.
- Only the resurrected Christ can save us.
- Hebrews 12:2, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God”.*