

James 4:11-17
“Humility in Action”
June 7, 2026

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Vv 11-12 Humility in treating our Christian brothers and sisters
Vv 13-16 Humility in treating our life plans

V 11 “speak evil of” Gr *katalaleo* speak ill of, speak degradingly of, speak evil of, defame, slander (BDAG); criticize “one another, brethren” our fellow believers
We judge the law when we criticize our fellow believers because the law says “Love your neighbor as yourselves.” If we act like this particular law does not apply to us, then we become judges of the law, not doers of the law. See **James 2:8-12**. Humility is being kind and non-judgmental toward one another; not spreading bad news about each other; not criticizing one another; realizing that we are all sinners, we all make mistakes, and it’s not our job to point out one another’s mistakes to each other and condemn one another.

V 12 There aren’t two judges, there is only one Judge. And He is able to destroy. and He says, Love your neighbor as yourself. BE HUMBLE!! When we criticize, we are placing ourselves in the position of judge; we are saying, in effect, “I’m not guilty of anything, but that person is.” See **Matthew 7:1,2**. See **Romans 14:1-4**. Considering non-moral things, (clothing style, school, lifestyle, car you drive, etc.), some think everything must be either right or wrong; others see a wide range of liberty. Each is to accept the other, without judgmentalism.

Vv 13-15 “Come now...” James invokes the gravity of at least two OT passages, **Exodus 3:10**; **Isaiah 1:18**. The itinerant merchant was a common means of business in the ancient world. This is a warning against making our plans without considering God’s role in our lives, nor the uncertainty of life, nor the brevity of life. See **Luke 12:16ff**.

But also, a warning against a *formulaic approach* to our goals as believers living the Christian life. We tend to see life like the merchant in this passage: “go to such and such a city” + “spend a year there” + “buy and sell” = “make a profit”.

This represents the legalistic attitude of, “I’m going to be good, so God will give me what I want.” In reality, following the Lord does not carry guaranties of *anything*; the theme of this epistle is about managing the trials that come our way.

Job said, “...Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” **Job 2:10**.

Peter recognized that there was no option to following the Anointed One from the Creator God: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” **John 6:68**. And yet, Jesus told Peter that he himself would be crucified as an older man, **John 21:18**.

Humility before God is living with the understanding that there is nothing that God will not allow to happen in our lives.

Humility is accepting God’s permissive will with the attitude of being quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Our goal as believers is being approved through the testing of our trials, **James 1:12**. We are not in a transaction with the Creator God, we are in a relationship with Him.

Vv 16,17 May we model not the arrogance of the person who lives his or her life without regards to God, but instead the humility of Jesus Christ, who, “being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” **Philippians 2**.