

Perilous Speech

J a m e s 4 : 1 1 - 1 2 *

In congregations with the problems James has focused on (4:1–3), there could be no cessation of conflict unless there is a cessation of critical and condemning speech about others.

James echoes the teaching about judging others that Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount. *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged”* (Matt. 7:1–2). Judging is a most difficult task because it involves not only other people but also the law itself.

The command against evil speech (11a)

The caution not to set aside the Royal Law (11b)

The corrective that there is only one Lawgiver and Judge (12a)

The censure takes the form of a question to us (12b)

* These notes are prayerfully provided to aid, not replace, your personal study of God’s Word.