



JAMES 4:11-5:6

WARNINGS

BEGIN BY READING JAMES 4:11-5:6 TOGETHER:

¹¹ 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. ¹² There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

⁵ Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ² Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴ Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵ You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

NOTE: *After you read the passage together, pray, and then allow for a few minutes of silence so that you and your students can read over the passage again and start to think about it. This may feel awkward at first, but it's vital to allow for some reflection time before diving into the questions.*

When you're ready, begin the discussion by going through the following questions:

CONTEXT QUESTIONS

1. **How does this section connect with what has come before in the letter?**

NOTE: *This passage follows a section where James introduced warnings against worldliness. He is helping believers to live out their faith by warning them against practices and behaviors that go against the truth of the Gospel.*

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

NOTE: *As you go through these questions, give your students time and silence to really look at the text to see what God is revealing to them personally. Be patient with them as they seek to flesh out what they are seeing in God's Word.*

1. **How does this passage challenge you?**
2. **How does this passage encourage you?**

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

NOTE: *In this passage James gives several warnings: first against speaking evil and judging others, then against boasting about tomorrow, and finally against the injustices of the rich.*

The basis for these warnings is the sovereignty of God, who is our ultimate judge. If we believe the truth of His Word then we will relinquish our desire to judge others and entrust in His perfect judgment. We will give up control and trust the future to Him. We will recognize His hatred of injustice and seek to live justly with other people.

1. **What actions does James warn us against?**
2. **Why does he warn against these things?**

CHRIST CONNECTION

NOTE: *This section uses the sovereignty and judgment of God to warn believers against putting themselves in the position of judgment or control in their own lives. When we seek to be the gods of our life, when we decide who is evil and worthy of judgment, when we think we can control what the future holds, we will be led down a path that leads to destruction and injustice.*

We must be humbled by remembering that God is the only truly just judge, and He is the One who is ultimately in control. We will only truly grasp this when we come to see that the God who is the ultimate judge has already perfectly judged sin in His own Son on the cross. We will only truly trust in His control over all things when we see how He has already perfectly worked everything out to grace us with salvation in Christ. We will turn away from greed and injustice when we see the grace and mercy of God who satisfied perfect justice in the cross, but also offers us mercy and forgiveness in Christ.