

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

PUT THE BEST CONSTRUCTION ON EVERYTHING

James 4:11-12 “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. . .But who are you to judge your neighbor?”

Your reputation is priceless. You spend a lifetime building your reputation. You, or another person, can destroy it through a few misspoken words or even one misdeed. God cares about your reputation. He gave the eighth Commandment to show the value that He places upon your or your neighbor’s reputation, standing in your community, how people feel and speak about you or them.

James, in chapter four, verses eleven and twelve teaches about the eighth Commandment. He writes, “Do not speak evil against one another, brothers . . . but who are you to judge your neighbor?” (James 4:11-12) Upon careful reading of these two verses James is especially concerned about how you speak about a brother or sister who is a fellow believer in Jesus Christ.

The Devil is always on the prowl to cause dissension and disruption within the fellowship of believers. His goal is to cause fellow believers to no longer pray for, encourage and care for one another. He does all in His power to cause you and your fellow Christians to see the “spec” in your brother or sister’s eye. He works overtime to cause a rift, create a fight, destroy the peace that Jesus desires to exist within His body, the church.

As Jesus told the self-righteous Pharisees wanting to stone the woman caught in adultery, “He who is without guilt can cast the first stone . . .” (John 8:37) Jesus taught, “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:37-38)

Luther explains the words of the eighth Commandment in this way, “We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain

everything in the kindest way.” God bless you and all you say and do to build up your neighbor and their reputation.

Prayer: Lord, lead and guide me in my thoughts, words and actions to deal with my neighbor and their reputation in a way that is pleasing to You and for their good. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

These are the holy Ten Commands God gave to us by Moses’ hands
When high on Sinai’s mount he stood,
Receiving them for our good.
Have mercy, Lord!

“Bear no false witness nor defame
Your neighbor’s nor destroy his name,
But view him in the kindest way;
Speak truth in all that you say.”
Have mercy, Lord!

You have this Law to see therein
That you have not been free from sin
But also that you clearly see
How pure toward God life should be.
Have mercy, Lord!

Our works cannot salvation gain,
They merit only endless pain.
Forgive us, Lord! To Christ we flee,
Who pleads for us endlessly.
Have mercy, Lord!
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