

Lips on a Leash

James 4:11-12

“Speak against” in 4:11 is a broad term. It includes more than slander (destroying someone else’s reputation). It includes criticizing, wrongly judging, condemning, insulting, telling tales, passing on rumors, sowing seeds of suspicion, etc.

The same person called a “brother” in 4:11 is called a “_____” in 4:12. Speaking against a fellow believer (a sister or brother in Christ) is the _____ of loving her or him.

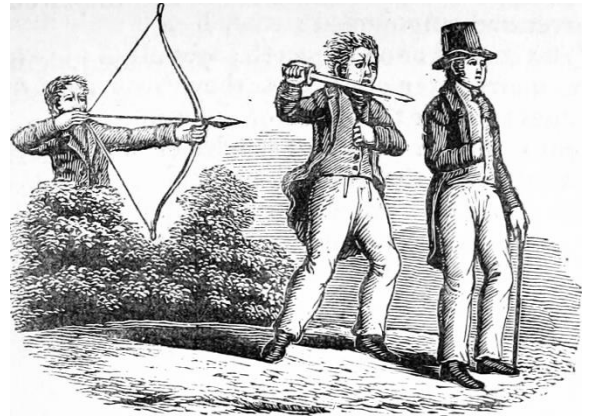
Me speaking against a fellow believer is me violating God’s _____ and me usurping God’s _____. “My role is hearer and doer, not judge.”

“To lie about a brother, or to accuse him falsely of anything, is to do the devil’s work.” This includes passing on rumors we’ve heard. We don’t have to start the lie to be satanic in our speech. We can do so by just keeping it going.

This is not to rule out the practice of discernment, the labeling of sin as sin, constructive criticism, or loving rebuke. “Instead, it is to root out the harsh, unkind, critical spirit that continually finds fault with others.”

“Let us not attempt to judge a man’s motives. We cannot look into his heart. Let us take the most charitable view possible and give others the benefit of the doubt. If the facts are not clear or the details are lacking, let us refuse to judge our brother.”

For us to think that we can discern or judge the thoughts and intentions of a brother or sister’s heart reveals just how arrogant we can be, for in that moment we are thinking that we can do what only God can do.



And let us remember: “An evildoer _____ to wicked lips, and a liar _____ to a mischievous tongue.” (Proverbs 17:4, ESV)



When we keep our lips on a leash, we are _____ God’s law, _____ our neighbor, and _____ in our proper place in the universe.

“Let us remember that this is not really a problem of the mouth; it’s not a problem of vocabulary; it’s not a problem of communication technique; it’s a problem of the _____.”

Let us look to the Lord Jesus Christ to rescue us from us and to give us the power to keep our lips on a leash.