

**Recap of 9/29/24 message by Pastor Joe Ricchuiti
(James 4:11-12 “Taking the Place of God pt. 1”):**

- 1. In James 4:11,12 James issues an imperative, a command to believers. The force of what he says is something like: “Stop speaking against one another, stop faultfinding, stop criticizing each other! They were in the habit of criticizing one another. They were exhibiting a “harsh, unkind, critical spirit which was continually finding fault with others” They were experiencing the predictable results of living out earthly wisdom instead of heavenly wisdom, something Paul described earlier in the book, in chapters three and four.*
- 2. By acting in this way, they were setting aside the Royal Law James spoke of in 2:8. They were usurping God’s authority and prerogative and setting up “another “law by which to judge fellow believers.*
- 3. The question in James 4:11-17 for James’ readers and, in fact, all believers is “Are you taking your place under God or are you taking the place of God in Your life?”*
- 4. Katalalia (Greek)- “to speak against,” is the sin of those who meet in corners and gather in little groups and pass on confidential tidbits of information which destroy the good name of those who are not there to defend themselves.” “There is great necessity for this warning. People are slow to realize that there are few sins which the Bible so unsparingly condemns as the sin of irresponsible and malicious gossip. There are few activities in which the average person finds more delight than this; to tell and to listen to the slanderous story—especially about some distinguished person—is for most people a fascinating activity. (Barclay)*
- 5. “Speaking against” other believers destroys three people: the speaker, the one spoken to, and the one spoken about. The passage is a warning about being critical and faultfinding at church, but also at home in marriage, in childrearing. And in other relationships. Articles such as Probe Ministries’ “Why Marriages Fail” by Kerby Anderson gives clinical data which backs up the Biblical assertions. Communication patterns such as escalation, invalidation, negative interpretations and withdrawal and avoidance are toxic to relationships. Other articles explore the negative impact of criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.*