

Do Not Judge a Brother

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of balancing truth and love in our interactions with others, and encourages us to practice discernment and righteous judgment.

Duration: 38:04

Scripture: Proverbs 27:1, Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 13:1-7, Romans 14:13-23, Titus 3:10, James 4:11

Topics: "Judging Others", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the topic of not judging others, emphasizing the importance of understanding the context of biblical teachings on judgment. It highlights the need for self-examination before criticizing others and the significance of erring on the side of grace. The sermon also addresses the issue of gossip, the balance between truth and love, and the role of judgment within the church. Additionally, it explores the concept of boasting about future plans without considering God's will and the dangers of making decisions solely based on financial gain.

Transcript

If you have your Bibles, you can turn to James chapter 4, James chapter 4. We've been going through the book of James, and I believe this is part 8. If I have it right here on my notes, I forgot to go back and check. But we've talked through, we've been going through the book of James, this is part 8. So if you haven't been here, make sure to go on our website and we can get you the last 7 messages. And the topic tonight is do not judge a brother.

Do not judge a brother. And this is a very interesting topic because you're going to see this actually more and more throughout the, probably at least through the next 4 years of Trump's presidency, whoever's elected after him, it just seems to be a bigger, bigger issue on judging. Because when you talk about gay marriage, they say, oh don't judge, don't judge, be quiet.

When you talk about abortion, who are you to judge? And that's how they silence, you can't judge me, the Bible says judge not. And as we know, context is king. When you look at a scripture in the Bible, the context is the king.

The context, what I mean by that is, you can make the Bible say anything you want, if you just take out little pieces here and there. So you look at the entire context of that famous scripture, judge not. Jesus says, judge not lest you be judged.

It's in Matthew. And we'll get to that in a minute. But that's what James is actually going to be touching base with as well to his readers.

Back then it was his listeners reading through. They would have letters passed out. James would write to the church and they would read these letters in their church services.

So verse 11 in chapter 4, James says, do not speak evil of one another. Do not speak evil of one another. Brethren, he who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law.

But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? Paul actually says in Romans that who are you to judge another servant? To his own master he stands or falls.

So there's this theme of judgment and judging others. And it's an interesting topic and here's why. On this side, the carnal side, I want to judge everybody.

You know, I just want to put them down, judge, judge, judge, judge, judge. But on this side, the Holy Spirit says, no, don't judge. As a matter of fact, err on the side of grace.

And you'll see that throughout the New Testament. If we're going to err, we want to err on the side of grace. However, this is a different type of judgment.

This is a type of judgment that a judge would render in a court of law guilty, making a judgment. And we're not in a position to do that. But Jesus would say when he says, do not judge in Matthew, as he's going through and putting everything in context, he's saying before you actually make a judgment, remove the plank, this huge plank from your eye, remove that from your eye, and then you can go and remove the speck from your brother.

So there's self-examination that takes place. So what he's talking about here is this eagerness to criticize, this eagerness to put down. Speaking evil is not constructive criticism or loving admonishment.

When he says, do not speak evil, sometimes people jump to the conclusion, well, I can't say anything. No, that's not being constructive in your criticism of someone or as a loving admonishment. When you truly love someone, you want to judge sometimes their lifestyle and make an assessment.

That's why Jesus covered Matthew 18 in the Bible, where you're supposed to go to a brother who's caught in sin, you bring a couple witnesses and you go, brother, we want to restore you. That's the whole point is restoration. And then if he ignores that, then you bring it to a larger group, the church body, and they have to treat him much like an unbeliever, not because they're being mean and judgmental, but it's because it's the process that Jesus gave us to lovingly, hopefully restore somebody to fellowship.

Now that doesn't work as well now in the 21st century. Are we in the 21st century? Yeah, I had to think there for a minute. But back then when you were taken out of a church, as far as, I don't know if excommunicated is the right word, I don't like to use that word, but if you were shunned and saying, listen, we can't fellowship with you anymore until you turn from this.

You can't date your father's girlfriend. Until you turn from that, we can't as a church fellowship with you. And they really wouldn't have another person to fellowship with.

The church was their whole life. Now when we say, you know what, Matthew, you're walking down a dangerous path, here's what we have to go. Okay, I'll just go to the church down the street.

They'll just switch to a different church or switch to somewhere else. So the effect really hasn't, it's really not as well as it was back in Jesus' time. But we still follow the course and it does work.

The whole goal is restoration, not to hurt somebody. So speaking evil is not constructive criticism or loving admonishment. It's talking about somebody negatively.

It's putting them down so you're raised up. It's tarnishing their image and hurting their reputation. It's basically lying.

Or you're telling something about someone that might be true, but they don't need to know. They don't need to know what that person did or what they went through, so you're speaking evil of them. Gossiping is what the Bible would say, or backbiting or slandering.

So I guess this was happening in the church. That's who James is writing to. So does it happen in the church? Not this church, Shane.

Well, not actually, not that bad. Not that I'm aware of at least, but it does happen. Because we're all guilty at some point of saying things we probably shouldn't.

So back to that question, doesn't the Bible say judge not? Who are you to tell people what they can and cannot do? Well, if we look at John 7 24, Jesus actually encourages his followers to judge with righteous judgment. This misconception of judging is an attempt to conform the scriptures to support opinions. So when people say, listen, about gay marriage or abortion or all these hot topics that the church isn't supposed to talk about, I guess, because they're hot topics, so keep your mouth quiet and don't talk about these things.

Who are you to judge? It's because they don't want God's word to shine into the light of their sin and turn from that sin. They want to say, don't judge me. I want to continue in my sin.

So most people that don't like to be judged are caught in this lifestyle and they don't want the spotlight of God's word put on them. We tend to pick and choose certain scriptures as if they are choices on a menu. But we can't choose those we like and discard the rest.

So judging, back to Matthew 7, within the context of Matthew 7, refers to the type of judgment, like I said earlier, that a judge would render in a court of law, such as Romans 14 4. Who are you to judge another servant? A judge hears the evidence and pronounces a judgment. It has to do with sentencing, not discerning. So we're not supposed to sentence someone, but we are called to discern.

I like to use the term fruit inspector. It's okay to be a fruit inspector. And what I've noticed, I've written articles, many of you know I write articles for the Christian Post and different news organizations.

On this whole thing of judging, it's not real difficult because as Christians, we are called to be the salt and the light. We are called to discern what is right and wrong. We are called to say, this is not right.

This is what's happening in our nation. This is not right. The pulpit used to set the tone of the nation.

I've talked about that before. We are to judge and to call things into question. But, as I've said before, the truth will offend, but my attitude shouldn't.

That's the difference. The truth will offend, but my attitude shouldn't. It shouldn't be a judgmental, go get them, angry person.

You've seen those people on TV, right? You're like, oh, please don't be representing Christianity right now. Please. And they're just mean and nasty and they picket and they protest the soldiers' funerals and just groups out there that are terrible.

Because it's all about judgment and being mean and nasty and arrogant. And I believe you can speak the truth boldly, but you can speak it and underscore it with love. But then you have the complete other side, and that's why I mention sometimes, and I do talk about Joel Steen a little bit, because he doesn't upset anybody.

There's no offense. Nobody's offended. Nobody's upset.

So you can't have that extreme either, because the Word of God, by its nature, truth by its nature, will offend. When you're calling sinners to repentance, when you're talking about the judgment of God, the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, it's going to offend, and rightly so. The Gospel offends.

If it doesn't offend, there might be something wrong. Because if we're trying to distort and soften it up and candy-coat it and make it easy, that's not the Gospel. But we also want to make it hard and an in-your-face type of an approach.

You have to find that balance. So Romans 14 is very interesting on this topic of judging. Romans 14 is based on convictions.

Who are you to judge another servant? To his own master, he stands or falls. And you're probably going, Shane, do you have a few examples? I'm glad you asked. I've got quite a few examples, and believe it or not, yours truly has fallen in this area before of being judgmental.

The truth, guys, you know who you are. It's all about truth. It's all about truth, and you've got to be careful because you can be the arrogant one.

You can be the judgmental one. And all of you that are all, it's all about love, and it's only Jesus' love and just His love. Be careful.

Come back to the truth side. You've got to get a little boldness in you. You've got to balance truth and love.

So here's, I believe, what Paul is talking about, how it applied to us today, and not judging and our convictions. And this topic's actually come up, I've gotten emails with people who don't live in this area, per se, out of the state. One guy's up in Canada, and we kind of go back and forth.

But on this whole issue of holidays, does a person, people don't celebrate Easter? You know, if they don't want to celebrate Christmas? Halloween? I wouldn't celebrate Halloween, by the way, but just, you know, maybe turn it into a good day, but not what people celebrate. But this issue of holidays, you've got to allow some flexibility and freedoms because there are convictions that maybe I don't share that you share, or you share and I don't share, and I'm like, oh, I can't believe you're celebrating Easter. It's Easter.

It's a goddess of Estar, and those fertility eggs, and you're putting little eggs around, and you're letting your kids collect the Easter eggs? You're just so off-base. My goodness, what are you thinking? And then I'm judging, then I'm forming an attitude, and I'm speaking evil. And I'm like, telling my wife, can you believe these guys? This is unbelievable.

They're celebrating this, they're doing this, so we can do that in holidays. What about schooling? Public school? Charter school? Home school? Hmm. Getting some good arguments there, can't we? Well, how could you use it? I mean, I've got good friends in all three of those.

Pastors I look up to, I could name them now. Many of you have read Francis Chan's book, I believe. And there's other pastors that their kids are in the public school.

They're just in San Francisco, up in that area, the Bay Area, or Texas, or California. And people are like, oh, how can they do that? Well, you talk with them, and they believe it's a mission field for them, and they're teaching their kids, and training their environment. And I have some thoughts on that.

But you can't be judgmental. You don't know a person's conviction. Charter schools, well, Shane, it's part of the government.

Yeah, but if a person has a conviction that they don't feel wrong about doing this, and they're able to teach their kids, and they're able to use that resource, and then there's homeschooling, and then homeschooling gets a bad rap, and everybody can have this judgmental spirit. So when it comes to convictions like this of the conscience, we can have strong opinions, but I have a feeling that it applies here. Because we're putting our own convictions on other people.

And I've noticed, too, that a person seasoned in their faith, 20 years, very mature, they're going to have stronger convictions than a person who's been a Christian two years, or a year. Like, how can they go to that movie? Oh, my goodness. Don't they know? And judgmental, and mean, and arrogant, and backbiting, and we can start to have that critical spirit come up.

And I've repented of this many times before. I'm sure I'll have to again. What about food? There are people who don't think we should eat meat.

Vegan, I know vegan Christians who are very adamant about this, and they'll have a case, you know, a good case. And I say, well, Jesus ate fish, and it kind of throws a monkey wrench into that thought. But they see how the government, I mean, if I showed you clips of how our meat is processed, you would vomit.

It's terrible. So they have strong convictions in that area. And I respect those convictions.

And it can go down the list. Lifestyle. I mean, sometimes, you know, like, how can they be a Christian, live in that home, and drive that car? Wow.

A Corvette? \$50,000 Corvette. Wow. How is that possible? What about if I rolled up in one of those? No, it wouldn't look good, would it? Perception.

But we start to form these, and people look at their neighbors when the garage doors open. They draw, what's in there? Oh, my goodness. Three Harleys.

Three Harleys. He's got \$75,000. I remember one guy, he claimed to be a Christian, and I didn't see a lot of fruit, but he spent, and he doesn't have a lot of money.

He took out a loan of \$40,000 on a chopper that they custom-made for him. And I'm like, what is, Lord, help me. But I saw this judgmental spirit coming up.

Now, there's nothing wrong with saying, in my mind, that's not wise investment. I don't think I would do that. But then leave it at that.

I can keep going if you like. What about movies? How can people watch certain movies? Now, I think that some of these things aren't necessarily a gray area. Like, yeah, you can go watch a new movie, Ouija, or all this darkness and seance and all this, you know, vampires and occult.

I mean, that's your choice. And I think things like that, you're crossing the line. Your darkness should not entertain the church.

But there are people who say you shouldn't go to a cinema. At all. You shouldn't go to the movies at all.

It's of the devil. Any type of movie. I haven't recently, but I used to get emails monthly that said I need to repent and put on a suit and tie.

Because real pastors preach in a suit and tie. And you've got to be in your suit and tie. You've got to have your King James Bible version and judging and judging and judging and judging.

And should we present ourselves the best we can in God's house? Of course. You know, you walk into Flip Flops and your hair undone. And when I had hair and, you know, it's just, I don't care.

So we should present ourselves well. But it's conviction. Conviction of our own hearts.

I'm reading a 1957 commentary on James. And one of the gentlemen is talking about this topic. He had a friend of his that didn't want any slides in church at all.

Back to the movie thing again. No slides, nothing in church at all. Don't put any slides up there.

But this commentator didn't agree because when missionaries would come in and want to show slides, he saw there was nothing wrong with that. But this friend was adamant that does not belong in God's house. So you see, you've got to have a little bit of leeway there.

And I've seen movie clips that have played in church and inappropriate. They don't need it. A lot of times the pastors need to be filled with the fire and the spirit of God and the spirit of truth.

You don't need a lot of gimmicks. And look at that. Isn't that cool? People laugh and try to relate to the culture.

And so I have opinions about that. I think I'm kind of careful in that area. I remember, I don't even know if I should say anything.

It's been a while so I probably should. But there's a church in town. I actually talked to the pastor.

He was talking about lying. And he played a clip from Jim Carrey's movie Liar Liar. And the clip was so inappropriate.

I could not even believe it. I looked at my wife. I'm like, oh, in a church? This is unbelievable.

And he goes, oh, I didn't really see that. The tech guy must have did that. And I'm like, I can't believe it.

So I was judgmental. But in that case, I think in the right way, you don't need to see barely clad women in a post up there as you're explaining about lying. Just talk about lying from God's word.

You don't need to show all these little bells and whistles and things like that. So judgmentalism. People even about television.

We shouldn't have a TV in the lobby. Well, it's not running Netflix all day long. It's showing our missionaries and our bulletin and things that they did in the Kids Connection building.

See, I believe the media and things like that can be used for good or evil. It's a neutral source. It's what you do with it.

You've got to be careful. Religious pictures up in different places. Because of my knowing a lot about Roman Catholicism, I'm kind of leery with having a lot of those little relics and pictures up and things like that.

I don't like that personally, but there are people I know that love the Lord that they've got them all over their house. And so you have to kind of just get rid of that judgmental spirit and realize that people have their own convictions. Communion.

There's a big conviction about that as well. How should we do it? There's people adamant that you use real wine and a certain kind of unleavened bread. And that's probably not a good idea if you've got 30 people who are former alcoholics and one taste of that is going to set them back in that direction.

Or do you take communion in this type of setting and pass the plate? Or the kind that we used to do in Lancaster, that type of setting. And really if you look at the Bible, communion was when believers are coming together, they're fellowshiping, they're breaking bread, they're having a meal together. The right way to probably do it is to have a potluck and where believers coming together were remembering what Christ did on the cross.

But there's no wrong way to do it, but we can become judgmental. Can't churches do that? Why are they standing? Why are they sitting? Why are they raising their hands? Why aren't they raising their hands? They're too charismatic. They're not charismatic enough.

Why is he not wearing a suit and tie? Why is he wearing a suit and tie? Why are they using hymnals? Why aren't they using hymnals? Why do they have pews? Why don't they have chairs? Why don't they? And we just, this judgmentalism, this what Paul would say here, who are we to judge another man's conscience? Alcohol is another big one. You know, in the church, you've got, you've asked Baptists, they say never. You ask Presbyterians, they say every night, brother.

And we know, the Bible's clear, that in moderation, very limited, don't post it on Facebook, don't make it a big deal, it shouldn't be too often, or you're addicted and you're hooked to it. It's pretty clear. But when we start to put, you know, now there's a lot of, well, I wouldn't say a lot, but friends I know who are young pastors, it's scary because they like to have now, make their own beer and have beer tasting at the Bible study, and it's not tasting, it turns into a six-pack per person.

I mean, that's just not working. That's not wise. That's not a good thing.

So we can take these areas and become judgmental about them. So I think that's what Paul was talking about in Romans 14. Take Romans 14 and read it.

He talks about, you know, if you don't want to eat meat because your brother will stumble in this whole idea of our own conscience. So here's a few things that have helped me over the years. The Bible talks about erring on the side of grace.

If I'm going to err, I'm going to err on the side of grace. Unless it's an issue that needs to be dealt with, unless it's a pretty big issue, we're going to err on the side of grace. Also, know the facts.

Know the facts. Hear both sides. I've been embarrassed so many times when I've rushed to a judgment hearing only one side and not waiting to hear both sides, and is it necessary to say something? When he says, speak evil of no one.

So if we're going to say something, I often ask myself, is it necessary? Does this need to be said? Is it going to build this person up? Is there a reason why I need to bring this to somebody's attention? And the biggest one of all, what I said earlier, Jesus said, remove the plank from your eye first. See, you can rightly judge others if you move the plank from your eye first. Well, Shane, what is that? That is humbling yourself.

It's when we humble ourselves and we say, you know what? I haven't mastered certain areas. I need help in this area, or I want to be humble about this and loving, and you go to the person or whatever this involves, and there's humility there. You're not rushing to judgment.

I'm always concerned about those who want to rush to judgment. Shane, you go get them. Go get them.

Let the church get them. Let's apply Matthew 18. Wait a minute.

It's just been a week. What are you talking about? There's a process here. So those who are eager to judge, eager to we shouldn't be eager.

It should break our heart. We shouldn't be eager to judge, and yeah, go get them, Shane, or go get them, whoever, and there has to be this loving humility there, and we also should, it's a little uncomfortable, but call others out when they are gossiping. Say something.

I usually say, well, you know what? You need to go talk to that person. We don't need to talk about it right now. You need to talk about it.

You need to go to them directly if they've bothered you. Well, yeah, but I, no, you need to take it to, and you, because you can be the catalyst for gossip, or you can stop it. Have you ever put gasoline on a fire? Keep that imagery in your mind about this topic.

That's what we do with gossip. Gasoline on the fire, or water. We can stop it.

We can stop it dead in its tracks. There's no reason in a true blood-bought, spirit-filled church of God that gossip should be traveling like this, and just all over the place. It should be stopped dead in its tracks.

And I know there's been churches who have actually church-disciplined people because they were gossipers, and they would not stop, and they kept putting down the church and putting down others, and it finally came to a point, that's how bad gossip is. So to sum it up, this passage, James is saying it's really about fault finding. Fault finding.

Many of you, I talked about John Calvin before, the reformer, John Calvin, who lived in Geneva, wrote a good set of commentaries. He said these words of Christ do not contain an absolute prohibition from judging, but are intended to cure a disease. That disease is criticism.

So he's going back to Matthew 7, when Jesus says, judge not. He said, these words of Christ do not contain an absolute prohibition from judging because we are supposed to judge, but they are intended to cure the disease of criticism. Now we all know what a critical heart is, don't we? Nobody in this room knows what a critical heart is.

My Lord. Nobody's being honest. We know what a critical heart is.

It's a heart that's critical and pointing out flaws in others. And often the reason we do that is as I pull you down, I'm built up. Or as I pull you down, I look more spiritual.

And that's the whole point of this, is to kill the disease of criticism. Now regarding moral issues that destroy lives and dishonor God, we are to judge. We are to call into question behaviors, choices, and lifestyles that lead people in a dangerous direction, especially if these issues are to become social policy and legally sanctioned.

So I believe the church should be able to judge and say, you know, target, wanting a grown man to use a restroom with my daughter is not a good idea. I'm not buying that. I'm going to speak out.

Who are you to judge, Shane? I'll tell you who I'm going to judge. I'm a father of three girls, and I'm going to judge that issue big time. But what about gay marriage? You shouldn't say anything? Sure we should.

The Bible is crystal clear. Not be mean and in your face, but to hold the ground. Do you realize that's the reason all these things have been able to be passed? It's because the church is silent.

We don't want to offend anybody. We don't want to upset anybody. But the church is called to be that beacon of light just to point people in the truth and to judge rightly.

That's what we're supposed to do, to judge rightly. Any type of social issue, judge rightly. Shane, everything from immigration to tax reform, to abortion, to gay marriage, God's Word is clear that we're able to judge rightly and say this is right or this is wrong.

That's very clear in the Scriptures. Now on a different note, within the church itself, we are to judge. I talked about that in Matthew 18.

A healthy church is a church that's loving and graceful, but when they hear about something, it's like that many examples, I don't want to list too many, but it hasn't happened here per se, but other churches where somebody is caught in adultery. They're not wanting to work it out with their wife and the church has to get involved and step it up a notch and talk to this person. Listen, we don't want to go this route.

Who are you to judge me? I'll tell you who I'm going to judge, you. According to Matthew 18, we have to judge this lifestyle. Maybe they're living together, they're not married, they don't want to get married, and

like, well, I'll keep ignoring it and hopefully they stumble on a verse someday.

Don't want to get done right at them. You see, what's their situation? What are they doing financially? Are they believers? Because you treat believers and unbelievers differently. Paul says if somebody's engaged in sexual morality or all these other things and they're a believer, have nothing to do with them if they're not going to repent.

But what about believers or unbelievers, Paul? He said, no, you'd have to go out of this whole world to do that. You're supposed to engage the unbeliever and help them turn and see their need for Christ, but the believer who's representing Christ and they're continuing in the sin, the church is to shun that, not to be mean and I can't believe you, I'm judgmental. I could say, take heed lest I fall, but I can't endorse this and we have to bring this up so that restoration takes place.

The whole goal of confrontation is restoration. That's the goal. That's the purpose.

It's never to kick somebody out and get rid of them. It's for restoration. But what I was saying on a different note, Titus 3.10 says to warn a divisive person a few times and after that have nothing to do with them.

So we are to judge in different areas. But here's what I want to talk about on a different note. In the church, we can become wrongly judgmental.

I've seen this before many times. We can, because we have a certain gifting or a certain calling, we tend to judge others that don't. For example, those who have a calling towards politics, Dobson, Tony Perkins, Family Research Council, David Barton, Wall Builders, and all these people you're seeing.

Thank God for them. Thank God for people. Can you imagine we just give up on everything? We don't have Christian judges.

So thank God for them. But then you have people who are primarily called to pastor and to teach. They have a different calling.

They're not going to have that same desire for all these political things. So the people on the political side say, why aren't you being more political? And the people on the side who aren't political say, why aren't you being more according to God's Word and just preaching? Well, He hasn't called me a preacher. He's called me to get involved in here.

Well, He's called me and we wrongly judge each other. Why aren't you caring more about the mission field in Syria or Iraq or persecuting the Christian chain? I can't believe your church. Why? Because that's your passion.

That's your passion. That's what God's called you to do. So we come alongside of each other and our giftings, we use our giftings together.

Thank God for people like John MacArthur. But not real political. He's a teacher.

And thank God for these people who are political because they're involved in policy. They're involved in what the world's going to look like for my children and your kids and your grandkids. God wants us in all areas of life making a difference.

So be careful there because that's where I sometimes have to pull back because I'm more the John the Baptist not the John the Apostle. Lay on Jesus' breast and just sing a song. He's just real soft.

So when those pastors that are kind of cowardly and don't want to say anything and they're just loving and smiling, I have to be careful because that's not quite my calling. And they need to be careful because oh, he's just mean and spirited and he's just, you know, no, no, no, no, the God's Word is in my belly like a burning fire. I can't hold it back.

Where's your burning fire? But there is a time I believe in a place that we do need to sometimes lovingly challenge because I think the pulpits have been silent in many areas. I think we've been not wanting to offend. We don't want to offend people with the truth so we candy-coat it.

We don't want to offend people with the truth so we don't say certain things. We don't talk about certain things and that needs to be challenged. So that's another thing that happens in the church.

People, and I've seen this, people have such a desire for a certain thing. Abortion, there's people, we've had people that they want to go sit in front of Planned Parenthood and protest and pray for those people and thank God for that. Well, Shane, why aren't you there every weekend? Well, because I'm preaching and because I've got kids and they become judgmental and then that person who's in Africa, why aren't you more African? I'm like, well, why aren't you this? Why aren't you more in the word of God? Why aren't you more in worship? Why don't I never see you at church? And see how we can start judging each other instead of using those God-given gifts to come alongside and be the body of Christ.

How can I encourage the person whose gifting is that and mine might not be? I've just seen this in the church a lot. That's why you'll see there's a big divide. That's why there's a big divide in the church.

I believe on this issue, the whole issue, I don't want to keep bringing it up, but on politics, it's because God has clearly called some people to that arena without a shadow of a doubt. God instituted the government, the family institution, the church institution. He ordained the government.

He says in Romans 13 to submit to the government. They are God's avengers. If you do evil, be scared.

Be very afraid because they do not bear the sword in vain. So we want godly people in those positions, but we also want godly people in the pulpits. And we have to really just understand that there are different callings.

Did I get that point across? Okay, good. Now we're going to get into this next week a little bit. Verse 13.

I'm going to talk more about next week, but I want to leave you with this. Verse 13. This is about not boasting about tomorrow.

This whole point is, if you look in your Bibles, James 4, 13, it might say, do not boast about tomorrow. Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit. Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow, for what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. But now you boast in your arrogance, and all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

And at the first reading, people might say, well, he's being hardcore. Can't we say, here's what I'm going to do today or tomorrow or next year. Here's how I'm going to spend my year.

Well, the key is this. It doesn't say not to talk about or plan for the future. It says don't boast in it.

So the right way to do this is, Lord, here's what I'd like to do over the next year. I'd like to sell my house. I'd like to move here.

I'd like to do this. I'd like to store here. I'd like to get ready for this.

Lord, these are my plans. My mind sets my plans, but it's your ways that prevail. God, would you show me in this area? I'm giving you full control.

This is your life. Show me. This is my plan, but I'd like you to show me.

And I'll listen to you. I'll obey you. That's the right way to do it.

The wrong way to do it is arrogantly assuming that this is what you're going to do. Arrogance is self willed, and being self willed is not God-centered and therefore evil. Evil, that word, if you look it up in the Greek or the Hebrew, is something that opposes the character and nature of God.

So you think, evil, oh no, this is like terrible. Yes, it is, but anything that opposes the character and nature of God is evil or wicked. So when a person says, here's what I'm going to do.

This next year I'm going to save up. I'm going to store up. I'm going to take three trips to all around the world.

I'm going to plan this. I don't really care what God says. This is what I'm doing.

You're probably like, Christians don't do that, Shane. Oh, you have no idea. Yeah, we tell God, here's what we basically do more often than not.

Lord, here's what I'm going to do. Please bless my plans. And come hell or high water, we are going to fulfill those plans.

We're going to buy what we want. We're going to sell what we want. We're going to move where we want.

We're going to do all these things. And this is a side note. I hope nobody takes this the wrong way because I don't mean it the wrong way, but I've seen a lot of people move and I don't know if God's in it.

They just want to get out of bad old California. Well, guess what? Good old California is better than 99.9% of the entire world. And if you move, make sure it's God's will.

Because I'd rather be in East Los Angeles in the center of God's will than move and be outside of His will just because of some thing you read on the media that California is this or that. And yeah, it's a hard place to live sometimes, but we are so blessed and we should be so thankful. But I've seen people make decisions in their flesh and not looking.

So that's what this is all about. Don't say, here's what I'm going to do. I don't care.

Because the truth be told, when we want to do something, we don't want to know what God says about it. Now, will He call people to move? Of course. He does it regularly.

He often does it. There's peace. There's assurance.

They're waiting on God. They're looking for opportunities to serve. They're doing it according to God's will.

But just be careful because often we make our plans and we say, come on, God, bless it. Come on, you're not blessing it. You're still not blessing it, but I'm still moving forward because I'm too arrogant to admit that I was wrong.

So that's what He's saying here. All such boasting. Say, here's what I'm going to do and being proud about what you're going to do.

So the best thing to do is ask God for His wisdom before you do anything significant, even something little. But the whole point here, He's talking about those who say, come on, come now. Say, today or tomorrow we'll go to such and such a city and spend a year there.

Buy and sell and make a profit. He's also, the second thing I was going to get to next week is their focus. Their focus has nothing to do with necessarily God's will or helping people or serving.

It's all about money and making a profit. And anytime you make a decision on money alone, I guarantee nine times out of ten you are not going in a good direction. Well, Shane, shouldn't we consider our finances? Of course, it has to be consideration.

But those who make decisions based on finances alone often have the wrong focus because they'll compromise their family. They'll compromise time with their family. They'll compromise their marriage.

They'll compromise I don't know if there's a good church there. I don't care. I'm going to make \$10,000 more a year.

I know it's going to be harder on my family, but they'll get over. I know my kids are resilient. I'll spend more time with them in five years when I can retire a little younger.

And that's how it goes because we're chasing that almighty dollar. Let that almighty dollar chase you. Don't chase it because when you start to make decisions based on that, you'll sell something you shouldn't sell, or you'll go somewhere you shouldn't go, or you'll compromise your integrity.

You'll do things that he says here. They're evil. They're wrong.

They're self-centered, and they're focused on me.

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