



**August 31, 2025** | Matt Magee

**Series:** James

**Sermon Title:** Only One True Judge

**Main Scripture:** James 4:11-12

[Oak Grove Sermons Online](#)

## OUTLINE

1. Principle: God alone is the righteous Judge who saves and destroys.
2. Problem: We resist His authority, rushing to sit in the Judge's seat ourselves.
3. Gospel: The Judge became the judged—Jesus bore our verdict on the cross.
4. Response: In view of the cross, we lay down the gavel and pick up grace.

Practical examples:

- When you feel the urge to criticize, pause and pray (James 1:19).
- When you want to condemn, remember the cross.
- When gossip tempts you, choose to speak life (Prov. 18:21; Eph 4:29).

This is not behavior modification. It's grace-transformation. The Spirit rewires our desires so that we actually *want* to build up, not tear down.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MISSIONAL PRAYER CARDS: Remember to be praying about who you can minister to, and how. Pray with and for one another.
- Who can you invite to join your Community Group?

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Group Leader:** See if your group has reviewed the latest newsletter and briefly skim together if needed. [NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE](#)

**Read** James 4:11–12 aloud together.

**Icebreaker:** Share one time when you felt unfairly judged or when you judged someone else too quickly.

**Principle:** What does James teach about God's role as Judge? (Read James 1:17 and Deut. 32:39 to see what these verses contribute.)

- How does this truth free us from judging others?
- How do we harmonize (understand different passages that *seem* contradictory to be in harmony with the Bible's overall teaching) this with Matthew 7:1-6 and Matthew 7:15-20? (Matthew 7:1 may be the most misunderstood and misquoted verse in the entire Bible.)
- Add to this harmonization 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:17-18; 2 Timothy 4:10, 14; 3 John 9-10; Philippians 4:2; Colossians 4:7. (Passages included below for quick reference.)
  - 1 Timothy 1:19–20 | "holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."
  - 2 Timothy 2:17–18 | "and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some."
  - 2 Timothy 4:10 | "For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia."
  - 2 Timothy 4:14 | "Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds."
  - 3 John 9–10 | "I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church."
  - Philippians 4:2 | "I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord."
  - Colossians 4:7 | "Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord."

**Problem:** Why do we so often move into judgment? (Read James 3:5–8; Luke 18:11–12).

What idols (control, pride, insecurity) feed our judgmental spirit?

**Gospel:** How does the cross change the way we see judgment? (Read Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Share a story of when you experienced God's grace instead of judgment.

**Response:** What practical steps can help us build up instead of tear down? (Read Eph. 4:29; Gal. 5:14).

How can we, as a group (and church), cultivate a culture of grace with our words?

**Prayer:**

- Confess where you've judged others.
- Thank Jesus for bearing your judgment.
- Ask the Spirit to help you speak life this week.

## **FAMILY MINISTRY GUIDE AND OBJECT LESSON: "The Gavel and the Mirror"**

**Parents**, this week, whenever your child is quick to criticize or argue, gently remind them: "Put down the gavel, pick up grace." Encourage them to pause, look in the 'mirror' of God's Word, and remember that only Jesus is Judge—and He showed us mercy at the cross.

**Supplies:**

- A toy gavel (or wooden spoon)
- A small handheld mirror

**Lesson:**

Hold up the gavel and say:

"This gavel is what a judge uses in court. Only the judge has the right to use it. But sometimes, we act like we're the judge. We point out people's mistakes, gossip, or think we're better than them. When we do that, we're picking up the gavel when it doesn't belong to us."

Then hold up the mirror:

“Instead of holding the gavel, God wants us to look in the mirror. The Bible is like a mirror—it shows us our own hearts and how much we need Jesus. And the good news is that Jesus, the real Judge, took our punishment at the cross. That means we don’t need to judge others—we can love them with grace.”

Takeaway Line (repeat together):

“Only God is the Judge. I can put down the gavel and pick up grace.”