

## Before the Lesson

**Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets.**

Scripture passages: James 4:11-12

What validates the reality of an authentic and genuine faith? Good intentions, a “good heart,” a good reputation, saying the right thing, believing the right thing? No! The validity of our faith is seen in the way we live, the way we interpret and follow God’s law. Of course we are not “saved” by the law; we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. But our faith is proven by the way we live out God’s perfect law – the Law of Love.

In James, the early Church was having issues with judgment. They were condemning one another, speaking evil against each other, destroying each other’s character, and killing their witness with sword-like attacks. Relationships and reputations were being ruined; rivalry was running rampant. They were wearing the self-righteous robes of judgment rather than clothing themselves in love and humility. There was no building up, only tearing down. James corrected his fellow believers by reminding them that there is only one righteous judge – Jesus. He confronted them with the truth that loving others is an act of grace – God’s grace. Jesus satisfied all the requirements of the Law, and in doing so, He negated any attempt we may have of qualifying it by human measurement. It wasn’t complicated then, and it isn’t now! Christ met the demand, so He gets to judge.

Do the intentions of your heart line up with the direction of your life? Does your standard for righteousness mimic God’s true righteousness? Let’s spend some time examining the validity of our faith and see what adjustments must be made so that our walk and talk are genuine and show love to those around us.

### **Focus question:**

Does your standard for righteousness mimic God’s true righteousness?

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## Group Discussion

- Give an example of a time when you were judged or misjudged.
- What did that do to your relationship with the person judging you? How did the judgment affect your reputation? How did you respond to the judgment?
- Read James 4:11-12. What does the phrase “The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law” mean?
- Who is the “one law giver and judge”? (See also John 5:22.)
- Give an example of a time when God, through His Holy Spirit, convicted you of a sin.

- What did that conviction do to your relationship with God? How did that form of “judgment” affect your reputation? How did you respond to God’s “judgment”?
- According to John 16:8-11, Jesus judges against what three things?
- Have you come to a time in which Jesus has convicted you of the sin of not believing in Him? What was your response? Did you turn to Him in repentance and confess Him as your Lord and Savior? Would you share this with your group?
- John 16:10 speaks of being judged because of righteousness. Our standard for living is based on the righteousness of God the Father who is completely perfect and supreme. If God is our plumb line for righteousness, is there any way we can act as judge for someone?
- Knowing the above, why do we choose to cast judgment? Discuss the points below:
  - We judge because of our expectations, yet we will never measure up to the expectations and demands of another person. It is the idea of measuring up to or pleasing another. (Think of these relationships as you ponder this truth: parent/child relationships, mate-to-mate relationships.)
  - We judge out of self-righteousness. The idea that my demand on you is more important than God’s demand on me. This contradicts the law of love. (Matthew 22:37-39)
  - We judge because we substitute our standard of righteousness for God’s. (Luke 18:9-13)
- John 16:11 says that Jesus convicts the world of judgment because Satan is judged. Jesus satisfied the demand for sin; therefore, He is a believer’s only judge. How should this affect the way you treat your neighbors, your family members, the gas station attendant, the grocery store clerk, the person at work who got a raise and you didn’t?
- What is the difference between judging someone and being a loving Christian brother or sister and pointing them to truth when you see a genuine sin in their life? Discuss the process for going to someone and lovingly pointing them to truth.

## Further Study (to be used in your personal Quiet Time)

Take time to examine your heart this week in relation to judgment.

- Are there specific people whom you tend to judge? Who are they?
- Confess your sin and ask Jesus to change your heart.
- Read and pray through Psalms 32 and 51.

For additional resources, visit [warrenlifenotes.com](http://warrenlifenotes.com).