



July 22 & 23, 2023







Our Decision on What Will Be “GREATER THAN”

1

Our natural response to our problem people vs. God’s commands.

James 4:11-12 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

James teaches us...

- This is broader than our modern definition of slander
— Can include speaking harshly or reviling.
- Slander can be equated with judging.
- We equate ourselves with God when we condemn others
— The height of arrogance and pride.

Matthew 5:43-44 (NIV)

You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

Genesis 1:27 & 2:7 (NIV)

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them... Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

**Foundational Truth in *GREATER THAN*:
Everyone is an image-bearer of God.**

2 Regarding our problem people: Let my love for them be GREATER THAN my disagreement with them.

1 John 4:7-8, 16b, 19-21 (NIV)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love ... God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them ... We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

- What if?

3 *GREATER THAN* in the story of Jephthah

Judges 10:6-8 (NIV)

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths... the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites.

Judges 11:1-3 (NIV)

Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him.

Worldly Corruption (Israelites' Condition)

Judges 10-11

- 10:8 — Shattered, crushed and oppressed (18 years!)
- 10:17-18 — Threat increased with no leader and no savior!
- 11:3 — Arrogant, greedy and condemning.
In need of salvation.

Godly Character (Jephthah's Character)

Judges 11

- 11:1 — Mighty warrior
- 11:3 — Natural leader
- 11:7 — Savvy, attentive and relationally perceptive
- 11:9 & 10 — Gracious and a servant of the Lord
- 11:12 — Diplomatic
- 11:14-27 — Scripturally astute

Israelites' Actions / Response / Repentance

Judges 10:10-15 (NIV)

Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals." The LORD replied, "When the [other nations] oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!" But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And he could bear Israel's misery no longer.

Judges 11:4-8 (NIV)

Sometime later, when the Ammonites were fighting against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites." Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?" The elders of Gilead said to him, "Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be head over all of us who live in Gilead."

4

Making my love for my problem people be GREATER THAN my dislike of my problem people means I...

Lord Jesus, help me to/have me to...

Listen (and Learn)

James 1:19 (NIV)

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

Proverbs 17:28 (NIV)

Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.

Observe (Understand, Discover)

Psalms 119:18 (NIV)

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Value my “problem people”

Psalms 139:13-14 (NLT)

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

Engage in prayer for them

Matthew 5:44 (NIV)

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

Luke 6:37 (NIV)

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.



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