

## “Games People Play!”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. Oh the *Games People Play* (best selling book 1964; The Psychology of Human Relationships)!
1. It was about subtle ways people manipulate others, w/o them even aware.
  2. A book, *Games Christians Play*, came out in 1967. Taking readers behind the scenes in the Christian community, to reveal games played *beneath a religious veneer*.
    - a) [Oh yes, in 1968, there was a *Joe South* song by that name]
  3. **We as Christians play games like:** The, I *know* more than you do game... “When you have been a Christian as long as I have...” (like they were born in a choir loft? - or, saved at age2?)
- B. James introduces us to the most widely played game among Christians then/now...
1. **Playing God w/Others** (11,12) & **Playing God w/Yourself** (13-17).
  2. As **Satan** manipulated **Adam & Eve** into playing his rebellion game, **all of us** have been born w/a natural passion for wanting to *be God in our own lives & in the lives of others.*<sup>1</sup>

### II. **GAMES PEOPLE PLAY!**

- A. **“PLAYING GOD” WITH OTHERS!** (11-12)
- B. Here’s this 1st games objective: Imagine yourself as **superior** to other Christians, & put them down in various ways!
- C. **Rule #1:** You must *speak evil* of your brother or sister. (11a)
1. **Speak evil** - to talk against, to defame, “*to talk down*”.
  2. It usually applied to harsh words about the person **who is absent**.
  3. It’s the idea of talking about 1 person, to another person, w/the goal of *lowering your listener’s estimate* of that 3rd person.
    - a) So they’re not around to defend themselves; & little concern w/accuracy.
    - b) And it’s neatly wrapped in a *thin phony veneer* of “*Perhaps I shouldn't share this but...*” or, “*I don't mean to be critical but...*” or, “*we need to pray for so-n-so.*”
- D. **Rule #2:** You must *judge* your brother or sister. (11b)
1. **Judge** - to pronounce condemnation upon someone.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles Swindoll; James.

2. In order to judge someone rightly though, we must know **ALL** there is to know about that other person.
  - a) It requires the *complete understanding* about that person's **thoughts & motives** that only **God** possesses!
  - b) **Jesus cautioned about hypocritical judgment in Mt.7:1-5** (splinter/plank).
    - (1) If you see someone else **doing wrong** ask yourself whether *the same evil in another form*, is hiding inside you somewhere.
3. **The law** James is probably referring to was *the royal law* he already mentioned in **2:8** "*love your neighbor as self.*"
  - a) Will you set yourself above this law? Or, declare it's a bad law?

#### E. **2 Reasons** why *not* to play this game!

- F. **Reason #1:** It places us in a position of authority reserved for God alone. (12a)
1. It is highly probable we don't have *all the information on our friend*, thus we could very well be mistaken, partial, misled! **Only God knows the deepest facts!**

G. **Reason #2:** Playing God ignores or excuses our own failures. (12a)

1. **One of the easiest ways to hide our sins is to expose the sins of others.**

#### H. **Who are you to judge another?** (12b)

1. Original, the personal pronoun **you** is placed 1st in the sentence, "**You there! Who are you...?**"
  - a) This turns the spotlight away from **others** & puts it full force on **us**.

#### I. **"PLAYING GOD" WITH YOURSELF!** (13-17)

- J. (13) Our lives are completely in **God's** hands. *Therefore*, we must live trusting **Him** for every moment.
1. Imagine for a moment **you** as the final authority over your life, **then** live like it.
  2. Take God completely out of the picture; **don't** depend on Him; **don't** even recognize His existence.

K. **Rule #1:** Choose your own **time & schedule**. (13a) [*Today or tomorrow*]

L. **Rule #2:** Choose your **location**. (13b) [*we will go to such and such a city*]

M. **Rule #3:** Choose how much **time** there. (13c) [*spend a year there*]

N. **Rule #4:** Choose your own activities around your own **benefits & pleasures** (13d)[*trade*]

O. **Rule #5:** Choose how much you'll make in **profits**. (13e) [*make a profit*]

P. **Rule #6:** Choose to **boast** about it. (16) [*now you boast in your arrogance*]

- Q. James isn't coming against day planners, or advocating haphazard organization!
1. God condones wise planning.
  2. Prov.16:9 **The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.**
  3. Eph.5:15,16 **Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.**
  4. **But** are plans are always to be according to **His will**, acknowledging **His sovereignty** in our lives!
- R. **3 Reasons** why we'll *never* win at **Playing God!** (14)
- S. **Reason #1:** Tomorrow's circumstances are totally **uncertain**. (14a) [You do not know what will happen tomorrow]
1. An *unexpected injury; sudden death of a spouse; loss of a job*; can instantly change everything! [Life is so transient & brief]
  2. **Wanna make the best of it then?** Ask the divine Spirit to choose for you & guide you. **Discover God's will & do it.**
    - a) Find out where God is moving & move w/Him!
- T. **Reason #2:** We have no assurance of a long life. (14b) [For what is your life? It's even a **vapor** that appears for a little time & then **vanishes** away]
1. **Vapor** (ἀτμίς *atmis*) - *steam, smoke*. (**steam** from a kettle; or **smoke** which the wind carried away & graphically depicts the transience of life)
  2. **Vanishes** - *to make to disappear*.
    - a) Aristotle used the word of the *migration of birds*.
  3. Like Moses' Psalm in **Ps.90** (esp.3-6).
- U. **Reason #3:** We have no right to ignore God's will. (15) [Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that]
- V. What is the Christians greatest sin against God today?
1. Explain difference of sins of **Commission** (we know what **not** to do & we do it anyways) & **Omission** (we know what **to** do & we choose not to do it).
  2. This is why I'm always getting on us for **knowing so much & doing so little**.
- W. We are in so much trouble! - **What do we do with this info?**
1. 30,000 children die every day of hunger & preventable disease.
    - a) 13 million people die every year from infectious & parasite diseases... we know how to prevent!
  2. **1.2 billion** of our neighbors live in **absolute poverty**. (\$1 or less, a day)  
That's more than population of U.S., Canada, & the whole European Union combined!

- a) **1.6 billion** are very poor (\$2 or less, a day)
- b) So, **2.8 billion** [That's almost 1/2 our world going to bed hungry every night]
- 3. Over 1 billion people have no access to improved **drinking water**.
- 4. Lack of **Vitamin A** kills a million *infants* a year.
- 5. **Iron deficiency** is the most prevalent form of malnutrition worldwide, affecting an estimated *2 billion* people.
- 6. **Iodine deficiency** is the greatest single cause of mental retardation & brain damage. **This affects 1.9 billion people. Can be easily prevented by adding iodine to salt.**
- 7. **Human trafficking:** \$32 billion yr business. **3rd largest after drugs & weapons**
  - a) **Children exploited in sex trade every year?** 2 million.
- 8. 100,000 live **enslaved** in the U.S. presently
  - a) 17,500 new victims trafficked across our borders each yr.
  - b) Another 30,000 pass thru on their way to other International destinations.
  - c) 27 million slaves in the world (50% are children)
- 9. **Children soldiers:** 300,000. **50 countries recruit children under 18; young as age 7**
- X. **Q:** What difference would it make to your life if you ***took seriously*** the definition of sin in verse.17? (trafficking)
  - 1. "In the end we will not remember the words of our **enemies**, but the silence of our **friends**." Martin Luther King
- Y. May our prayer be...**"Thy will be done, in me as in Heaven!"**