

The book of James

3:1-12

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of James.

This week we are starting chapter 3, and the opening verse is a hard one for me.

✠ **James 3:1** *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*

✠ **James 3:1 (NLT)** *Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged by God with greater strictness.*

I know it's easy to say something, but it's always harder to do. That's the way it is with teachers of God's word. Not only are we to teach God's word, but also we are to be examples of what we teach.

What good would it do if I told you not to have sex before marriage if I did it? What good would it do to tell you not to get drunk, if I did it?

What good would it do to tell you to be living examples of Jesus Christ if I don't?

Don't get me wrong; I love teaching God's word. To me it is one of the greatest gifts from the Holy Spirit. You may not agree but that's ok. You probably feel the same way about your gift.

If I wasn't a teacher of God's word, would I be any different? Would I sin more? The answer is NO! You see I try to do what's right, not because I teach God's word, but because of Jesus and what He did on the cross for me. I do it because I love Jesus and I'm thankful for all He's done for me.

Now before you sigh in relief that you are not a teacher of God's word. Read these next verse.

✠ **2 Tim 2:24-25 (NLT)** *The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth.*

Are you not a servant of the Lord? If you said yes, then you are to teach others also.

No you don't need to start your own web site teaching God's word (But if the Lord leads you to, then go for it. I would be happy to help you get started!).

You also don't need to be a teacher in Sunday school or in the church (once again only if you do not feel lead to by the Lord).

But according to these verses you are to teach others the way of salvation. You don't need a college degree (I don't have one), or to attend seminary (I haven't done this either). The only thing you need is God's word and a compassion for the lost.

So we all are living examples of God's word.

† **Romans 2:21-24 (NLT)** *Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you do it? You condemn idolatry, but do you steal from pagan temples? You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it. No wonder the Scriptures say, "The world blasphemes the name of God because of you."*

Tough words but ones we should remember as living examples of Jesus Christ. No, we are not perfect and we all fall. But that's no excuse for continuing in our sins. Others are watching you and me, and they see the way we handle things and react. Would someone want to become a Christian because of the way you are, or would they run from Christ afraid that they would be like you?

But you can sigh a little relief, because the word teacher here in James is referring to those who teach God's word, such as myself, your pastor or a teacher of God's word. In other words, more than just a living example, but one who studies God's word and teaches it to others.

Myself as a teacher of God's word, I am responsible for every word I put on this web site, that's one reason I encourage everyone who reads these studies to let me know if any of it is incorrect. After all, when you get to heaven you won't be able to say to God, "*Well Steve said it in his bible study*". Don't put your faith our trust in me, but rather study God's word to make sure you are getting the truth here or anywhere else, including the church that you go to.

† **2 Tim 2:15 (KJV)** *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

† **Acts 17:11** *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

James continues on.

✠ **James 3:2** *For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.*

We will come back to this verse, but before we do, James gives a few examples of what he is talking about.

✠ **James 3:3-8** *Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot*

desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Man has tamed wild animals, conquered mighty mountains, gone into the depths of the sea; we even have gone into space. But with all this technology we have never been able to control our tongues.

So what does it mean to control our tongues?

Controlling our tongues would be not yelling at the person who cut you off on the freeway. Or not yelling out of anger towards someone for something they didn't even do, or did do.

Controlling our tongues is not to get back at someone when they say something bad about you.

Controlling our tongues is not talking about others or gossiping.

Getting the idea?

We can exercise to build our muscles so we are physically fit, but there doesn't seem to be any exercise to strengthen our tongue so it is fit. Or is there?

Here are a few things you can do to help control what you say.

What do you watch on TV? Do the shows you watch show others yelling and gossiping? Sure they do on soap operas, but you would be surprised of how much it is done on other shows and commercials too. Try watching and listening to what others are saying and you will see what I mean. Even the cartoons we allow our children to watch are full of violence and deception.

By watching these shows your brain (or your kids brains) are getting in tune with doing the same thing.

What about the music you listen to? Is it uplifting to others with their lyrics or is it degrading to women and men to?

What they are saying, would you say it to your mother or father? Would you say it to Jesus? If Jesus were with you, would He want you to say those words or do what the song says to others?

That's why it's so important to listen to Christian music, because it teaches you to praise and lift up God, in return you do the same for others.

† ***Eph 5:19-20 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

What about when others are telling dirty jokes, or talking about someone, or even talking bad about the company you work for? Do you stand around listening to it and maybe even take part in the conversation? If you do, then you in a sense are condoning what they are saying.

† **2 Cor 6:17-18** *Therefore
"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."
"I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the LORD Almighty."*

Now we can't leave the world, but we don't have to stand there and listen to them. Maybe you are in a situation where you can't get up and leave with your job not permitting it. Does that mean you are condoning it? Only if you take part in the conversation, showing some sort of approval. It's best to say nothing at all and try your best to ignore such talk, not even appearing to be interested. If they ask your opinion, stop and think and ask the Lord what He would have you say. Just like we learned in chapter one.

† **James 1:19** *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*

You have heard the term "You are what you eat", but here it's more of "You speak what you hear and see".

A computer term is "garbage in, garbage out", which means if you put something bad in a computer program, you get nothing but junk when you try to run the program. It's the same with us, if we put dirty, sinful things into our mind (through TV, movies, the internet, the music we listen too, what we read, etc.), the same will come out of our mouths.

One more computer example. Say someone sends you a beautiful picture by e-mail but also hides a computer virus attached to it.

When you open the picture, your computer could very well be destroyed. You may look good on the outside, but if you are hiding sinful things inside that you know can hurt others, the results will be the same. You could hurt someone or even destroy his or her life.

James goes on speaking about the tongue and the things we say.

✠ **James 3:9-12** *With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree,*

my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

“Do you kiss your mother with that mouth?” Remember that old saying? Someone would say it to you when you started to cuss in school.

But it’s something to think about next time you have something bad to say about someone, or gossip, or curse, or? You could think of this instead “Do I praise God with this mouth?”

James answers the question for you.

✠ ***Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.***

If you are hungry for a nice red juicy apple, you don’t go to an orange tree, and if you are swimming in a lake, you are not afraid of being bitten by a shark (sharks are only in salt water).

People may come to you for advise when they are having a problem, or to confide in you with a sin thy are struggling with. They come to you because they know they can trust you, and they see the Lord in your life.

Just as you would go to an apple tree for an apple, they come to you because they are seeking God.

But what type of fruit are you giving them? What things are you telling them? Are they Godly things from God’s word, or are they the so-called wisdom of the world?

Here is the fruit that should be coming from our mouths.

✠ ***Gal 5:22-26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.***

✠ ***Eph 5:8-11 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.***

Jesus is the perfect example of these things. When He was being crucified on the cross people were yelling at Him, calling Him names, and even provoking Him. Did Jesus call down a bolt of lightning to destroy them?

But we know Jesus did not do this, in fact, what He did say even to this day has people in awe of His love.

† **Luke 23:34** *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*

With our tongues we can call down fire to destroy people who do not accept Jesus, or that are just picking on us because we are Christians.

† **Luke 9:54** *And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"*

On the other hand, we can be living examples of Jesus Christ and use His words ***"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."***

Maybe you haven't been showing Jesus in your life. Maybe you have been gossiping and treating others bad. Maybe you have hurt others with the things you say to them and about them.

If any of these are you; If the holy Spirit has been speaking to you through this study and has touched your heart, then I would encourage you to go to them and ask their forgiveness, then go to God and ask His forgiveness.

† **Matt 5:23-24** *"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

Maybe all this is new to you and you happened to stumble across these studies. The thought of the things you say have never occurred to you before. Yet you have come to realize that Jesus was beaten, crucified and mocked on the cross, and all He could do was love those who did this to Him, and you want this love in your life. You have found that this is not the love that the world calls love, but is way beyond that. The very thing you have been searching for all your life.

Today you can experience that love in your life for all eternity, and all it takes is a prayer to Jesus, acknowledging His love for you and what Jesus did on the cross for you.

Just pray:

Jesus, I now realize what you really did for me on the cross, I have read of and now see Your love for me. I ask you to please forgive me for my sins and I thank you for dying for all of them on the cross for me. Jesus, I want you as my Lord and Savior! Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and fill me with the love that You have. I'm tired of the world's so called love and self-seeking. May I share this love with others, this same love that You have for me. I ask this in Your name Jesus. AMEN!

If you just prayed this prayer from your heart you are now a Christian. You are not part of a religion, but you now have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Keep reading God's word, tell others about Jesus, and enjoy your new life in Jesus Christ.

To end this week's study, I will leave you with this thought.
Watch what you say to others and about others, but also watch what you are putting in your head, because it will affect what comes out of your mouth!

Next week we will continue in chapter three and study worldly wisdom verses Godly wisdom.

May God richly bless you with words of Praise to Him and for others.