

Men to Men Ministry
Lesson Thirteen in the Letter of James
Warning to the called of the church

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James 3:1-2 NASB

Do not become teachers in large numbers, my brothers, since you know that we who are teachers will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to rein in the whole body as well.

James 3:13-14 NASB

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

Overview of Chapter Three

There are two major sections in the third chapter of James. sections

- 1-12 Warnings about words
 - 1, 2 Warnings to those who use words – Teacher’s danger
 - 3-12 Warnings of the impact of words - Universal danger
 - 3-5a Little but powerful
 - 5b-6 A destructive fire and corruption within
 - 7,8 Beyond all taming
 - 9-12 Blessing and cursing
- 13-18 Wisdom from above
 - 13,14 Who should never be a teacher
 - 15-16 The wrong kind of wisdom
 - 17-18 True wisdom

Of note for our lesson tonight is that in this chapter there is a logical connection between verses 1 and 2, and the subsequent portion in verses 13 and 14. Both, directly and indirectly, refer to an office in the church.

What is a teacher?

One definition would be, “someone who makes an impact on others with words”. This definition is very broad and an inclusionary definition. If you change a person, a student, or just someone you run into at the supermarket you could meet that criteria. 10% of the world call themselves a teacher ~80 Million

There is a great difference between a teacher and an effective teacher.

A teacher is much more than someone who imparts knowledge. Here's a glimpse into what truly makes a teacher:

1. **Passion:** A deep love for the subject they teach and a desire to inspire that same love in their students.
2. **Empathy:** Understanding and addressing the diverse needs and backgrounds of their students.
3. **Patience:** The ability to explain concepts multiple times and in different ways until every student understands.
4. **Adaptability:** Flexibility to adjust teaching methods based on the learning styles and needs of their students.
5. **Communication Skills:** Clear and effective communication to ensure students grasp the material.
6. **Knowledge:** Expertise in the subject matter, as well as a continuous desire to learn and grow.
7. **Creativity:** Innovative approaches to make learning engaging and relatable.
8. **Dedication:** Commitment to the success and well-being of their students, often going above and beyond.
9. **Integrity:** Modeling ethical behavior and building a trustworthy environment.
10. **Encouragement:** Providing support and motivation to help students reach their potential.

Each of these qualities help create a nurturing and effective learning environment where students can thrive.

Teacher of the Word of God

James is specifically pointed toward Teachers of the Word of God.

In the early church, teachers were of great importance. Wherever they are mentioned, they are mentioned with honor. In the Church in Antioch, they were ranked with the prophets who set out Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1).

In Paul's list of those who hold great gifts within the Church, they come second to apostles and prophets, who, by the nature of their calling, were always on the move. They would never stay very long in any one place. Their call was to the church as a whole. The discipleship and nurture of the local church fell on the teacher. It was the teacher's responsibility to shape every convert into a Christ-like disciple.

The Christian teacher entered into a perilous heritage. In the Church, the teacher took the place of the Rabbi in Judaism. The very name of Rabbi means “My great one” and there is little wonder the title brings a higher responsibility and a higher judgment.

There are two dangers which every teacher must avoid. In the virtue of his office he will either be teaching those who are young in years or those who are children in the faith. He must, therefore, struggle to avoid two things.

1. He must have every care that he was teaching the truth and not his own opinions or even his own prejudice. It is fairly easy for a teacher to distort the truth and to teach not God's version but his own.

2. He must have every care that he does not contrast his teaching by his life. He must never come to a place where he says, "not do as I do but do as I say." He must never get into the position where his students cannot hear what he says because of a chosen lifestyle of the teacher. Jewish rabbis of the time said, "learning but doing is the foundation and he who multiplies his words multiplies his sins."

It is James' warning that the teacher has of his own choice entered into a special office and is therefore under greater condemnation if he falls in it the people and whom James was writing coveted the prestige of teacher but James demanded that they would never forget their responsibility.

Word of God Teacher

The responsibility to which teachers of the word of God go beyond the acquired skills. The Word of God teacher must be held to absolute standards of what is taught:

- **Doctrinal Integrity:** Ensures that the core beliefs and teachings of the faith are accurately represented and preserved, preventing false teachings and doctrinal errors.
- **Spiritual Growth:** Provides a strong foundation for the spiritual development of believers, helping them grow in their faith and understanding of God's word.
- **Moral Guidance:** Offers clear guidance on ethical and moral issues, helping believers live lives that align with biblical principles.
- **Unity:** Promotes unity within the church community by fostering a shared understanding of beliefs and practices.
- **Equipping Believers:** Prepares and equips believers for ministry and service, enabling them to effectively share their faith and support others.
- **Resilience:** Strengthens the church's ability to withstand external pressures and challenges, by grounding members in sound doctrine and biblical truth.
- **Witness to the World:** Ensures that the church's witness to the broader community is credible and authentic, reflecting the true message of the gospel.

Scripture exposition

As stated previously our scripture for this session includes two parts:

James 3:1-2 NASB

Do not become teachers in large numbers, my brothers, since you know that we who are teachers will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If

anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to rein in the whole body as well.

Do not become: Here is a very stern warning. There is danger here. That danger must be taken very seriously. It is an adamant stop sign. James is warning all those who are in the mindset to become teachers to come up short. The language here is specifically in the perfect continual tense: it means there are those who are actively seeking, striving, pursuing this very important role in the church.

In large numbers: these words are telling those who are seeking to become there is a selection process. It was not that there were those who were willing, but the requirements were not large. The goal is not to have enough teachers for any situation. But to have the right teachers. For James less was more.

Bothers: There is a qualification for being a teacher as stated here. Salvation is the dead line requirement to be a teacher.

You know: There was a common knowledge of something about teachers. Everyone seemed to know that the high calling has an even higher cost. A greater, a much larger standard of conduct and words.

James continues with a Comparison of those who should teach and who should not. **All fall short.** There is no exception to this. As Paul stated later in his letter to the Romans. "All continually fall short of God's perfected ideal." And here in James it expands this to say, "**In many ways.**" Humanity has many SARX motivated lusts and causes many FALLINGS. James gives an example of this idea. Everyone who would want to be a teacher must be held to a higher standard. Every word, every phrase, every teaching point must be intentionally perfect. If that is possible then it is much easier to control the rest of his life. It is easier to control your life than the WORDS that are spoken by a teacher.

James 3:13-14 NASB

Who among you is a man of wisdom and understanding? Let him show by the loveliness of his behavior that he does is done with gentleness. If in your hearts you have a zeal that is bitter, and selfish ambition, do not be arrogantly boastful about your attainments, for you are false to the truth.

James goes back to the beginning of the chapter. About teachers continues in his advice and warning. Is there any of you who wishes to be a real sage, a teacher of the Word OF God, to be the echo of his voice, START with a beautiful graciousness that is seen by all. Let that life be filled with love exhibited by gentleness.

Then he comes to a transitional **IF**. It is the hinge point from the selective nature of prospective teachers to a hypothetical presented to the prospective teacher. The teacher, the person who has assessed himself with wisdom and understanding, an inner assurance that the words to be spoken are simply echo's of God can be simply wrong. They may not have the amount they think they have. Their inner self assessment is off the mark. This self assessment characterized by an accompanying internal feeling.

This feeling is a **ZEAL** that is bitter. It is a feeling that "I can do it better" or "I can put someone in their proper place", or "can make my point because I am smarter" is an

indication that you are on the wrong track. Further, if your feeling are from my inner need to be seen as having wisdom and understanding is also a warning sign.

ZEAL is not a bad word. It is an emotional responsibility when faced with a higher power. When faced with the WORD of GOD and you feel that un deniable to live up to the standards and be what God wants more than anything: That is zeal.

But that zeal can be created by something else. **SELFISH** Ambition. The original form it was about women who would weave cloth to make a living. It was about the art of the task, the dignity of production good things. Through time the name changed to take with it that all the effort done without the satisfaction in the task but it became a selfish desire, for profit only. Then into politics to mean ONLY OUT FOR YOURSELF AND NOTHING ELSE. A WILLINGNESS TO DO ANYTHING TO GET THEIR OWN ENDS.

Any teacher and especially a teacher of the Word is under three great temptations:

1. **Temptation of arrogance.** Jewish heritage stated, “He that is arrogant in decision is foolish, wicked, and puffed up in spirit. To accept or reject your teaching is upon the students. If you adopt what I say that is for you. I do not force it upon you. It is very difficult to be a teacher or a preacher and to remain humble. BUT IS IT AN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY
2. **Temptation of bitterness.** Any well held idea can become a place of discord. Teachers who have given in to bitterness carry no weapons, but their tongues are sharper than any two edged sword.
3. **Temptation to hurt.** One of the hardest things is to meet argument without being wounded or to keep from wounding.

James also states there are characteristics of this temptation, of a teacher in his zeal to get his way, in his zeal it becomes:

1. It is fanatical. Held with unbalance zeal. No compromise, no surrender.
2. It is bitter sees those who disagree as enemies, rather than friends to be persuaded.
3. It is ambitious The inner desire is to display self and not necessarily the truth. Victory is more important that the content.
4. It is Arrogant. It is pride in knowledge not humility of understanding

What is the difference between a teacher and a teacher of the Word

Difference of source – the words of God – The Bible

Tony teaches English. Not really English but American English because it includes some idioms and phrases from the American culture. The problem is that the language we speak in his class may well have a common language but some of the words change meaning. A science teacher once taught that the world was flat. Worldly information changes, it evolves, it understands the context, new ideas, driven by culture.

The source of will of God is the Bible. Written in ancient languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. English changes from one century to the next but the words of the Bible remain the same. James would agree with men that the Word of God is perfect and should be taught that way.

This raises a debatable point: Inerrancy of the Bible. The inerrancy of the Bible is the belief that the Bible is without error in its original writings, and that it speaks truthfully when interpreted according to its intended meaning. The doctrine of inerrancy is based on the idea that God is perfect and that God's Word is free from error. Godly teaching is simply telling and retelling what the word of God says. Not what you want it to say. Not what the teacher wants it to say. Not what would serve the inner cultural set agenda.

Difference in selection

Being called to teach the gospel means being chosen by God to serve a greater purpose, influencing others, and contributing to the community. Some say that being called to teach means having a desire to teach and the gift to do so. Being called to teach means much more than having the compulsion to proclaim the Word and share the Gospel.

Gifted

The spiritual gift of teaching is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:1–12). It is a gift given by the Holy Spirit, enabling one to effectively communicate the truths of the Bible to others. It is most often, but not always, used in the context of the local church. The gift of teaching involves the analysis and proclamation of the Word of God, explaining the meaning, context, and application to the hearer's life. The gifted teacher is one who has the unique ability to clearly instruct and communicate knowledge, specifically the doctrines of the faith and truths of the Bible.

God gave spiritual gifts to edify His church. Paul instructed the church at Corinth to seek to edify and build up Christ's church, telling them that since they were "eager" to have spiritual gifts, they should "try to excel in gifts that build up the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12). A spiritual gift (charismata in Greek) is a supernatural, God-given ability to perform a ministry for the building up of the body of Christ. It is given graciously by God and cannot be earned. While a spiritual gift can be developed, it does require a supernatural ability to exercise it. One of these gifts is teaching.

There are some ways to discern if you are gifted to teach:

- **Seek God's will:** Pray to God to seek His will for your life and ask for guidance.
- **Teach and see if people listen:** If you want to know if you are a teacher, teach and see if people listen to you.
- **Develop your gift:** If you have the gift of teaching, develop and cultivate it. A gift of teaching is not simply opening your mouth with the expectation of Godly words pouring out on their own accord.
- **Prepare and put in effort:** Study, prepare, and put a lot of effort into the messages you preach.

- **Humility in audiences:** While everyone is responsible for teaching someone, some are gifted for teaching larger groups, and a few are called to teach full-time as a pastor.

I am afraid there are more teachers than teachers with a calling. There are those who God does not call. There are those who should never teach. There who take on the mantle of teacher and will suffer highly.

Difference of impact

Whether I know the total population of the world is 8.2 billion does not matter as much as knowing “For God so loved the world”. A teacher of the word of God impacts people for eternity.

In Ephesians 4:11–12, Paul lists foundational gifts for the building up of the local church. The gifts are given for the building up of the body of Christ. In verse 11 teachers are linked with pastors. This does not necessarily suggest one gift, but it does seem to imply that the pastor is also a teacher. The Greek word for pastor is *poimen* which means “shepherd.” A pastor is one who cares for his people in the same way a shepherd cares for his sheep. Just as a shepherd feeds his sheep, the pastor also has the responsibility to teach his people the spiritual food of the Word of God.

The church is edified through use of the gift of teaching as people listen to the Word of God and hear what it means and how to apply it to their own lives. God has raised up many with this gift to build people up in their faith and enable them to grow in all wisdom and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

Difference of accountability

The source, longevity, and impact cause a higher accountability and a stricter judgment. When I teach, when I ask questions, your answers also teach so please as you answer do so with a heavenly responsibility. God does not take teaching lightly. You don't mess with God's people. When you teach in your stupidity, you are messing with God's intent for the world.

Difference in motive

2 Peter 2:1–3 (NIV): Speaks in the negative about the motives of a teacher:

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

These false teachers introduce heresies, they deny the Master, they malign the truth, are driven by greed.

On the other side of understanding a teacher we see in Luke 17:7-10 a positive understanding of who should be teaching:

7 “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? 8

Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

The description here is of a servant to the master and the actions of that servant meeting the needs of the master. The servant is not be looking for a pat on the back. It is his duty to do above all else. When I share the insights, when I find a new understanding of God, when I tell of the Bible well, I AM NOT LOOKING FOR ACCOLADES, I DO BECAUSE I CAN DO NO OTHER, it IS DUMB TO GO AGAINST GOD. What I do for God deserves no praise. It do because it is am calling. Is what God wants of me.

I am just Larry. I teach what I find. I instruct on the revealed word as is it revealed to me. I AM JUST AN ECHO OF THE WORD WHO BECAME FLESH. What praise is there for a rock that echoes God's voice. I do because I can do no other.

If someone cleans up a spilt water behind the baptistry, do they need extra recognition? It is great to say thank you, but it may be a part of gift of helps.

If you give to the church should your name to displayed across the church screen?
Gift of Giving

When I complement a preacher it is never on the style or presentation but on the revelation. Gift of teaching

Difference in quality

The Jewish Christians were trying to regraft all the forms, and ceremonies (MOSAIC LAW) into the tree of Christianity. Was causing division, conflict and prejudice. The teachers of Judaism were corrupting the one true way. Unqualified teachers have caused the most vicious and distractive actions in the History of the Church.

Moses is among the Big ones in the Jewish faith. But he was not perfect. When the people in the wilderness were in need of water, God told Moses to speak to the rock. Moses did not think God was doing it the right way and struck it with his staff in anger. That anger was greatly noticed by the people. God held Moses at a higher level of responsibility and kept Moses from the promised land.

We all are human. We make mistakes. In our interpretation of the Bible and in our responses to teaching of the Bible. It is your responsibility to hold me to a higher standard in my teaching, interpretations and my life. My calling is to NOT go beyond what the word says. To never go beyond what is written.

Most of the questions I get from my website and on EMAIL are not specifically written about in the Bible. Usually cultural questions that may have impact on the questioner but not in the Bible. A young couple came to me because they were in disagreement about a style of clock they wanted to buy. . Wanted to buy a clock for their home. The choice was between a Grandfather clock vs a Mantle clock. It would have been easy to quote "Wives submit to your husband" and Husbands to love your wives as as Jesus loved. But that would not help much. My advice was to buy the cheaper solution and give the difference to charity.