

Let Not Many of You Become Teachers (James pt. 6; 3:1-12)

Michael L. Riddle

1. We continue our study of the epistle of James.
2. Chapter 1 dealt with the Christian's response to trials
3. Chapter 2 emphasized the need to not hold the faith with partiality and the need for a perfect faith.
4. Chapter 3 begins with a plea to "Let not many of you become teachers" and discusses two things which apply especially to teachers – the use of the tongue and the proper source of wisdom.
5. F

Discussion:

-----**James 3:1-5**-----

I. THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

- A. God has revealed His wisdom to us through His word which is able to save our souls – **1 Cor. 2:10-13; Rom. 1:16-17**
- B. But God intended for there to be teachers and preachers of His word
 1. For the edification of the body – **Eph. 4:11-12**
 2. To bring people to the Lord – **Rom. 10:14-15**
 3. To 'give the sense' of God's word – **Neh. 8:7-8**
 4. Some plant, others water – **1 Cor. 3:5-8**
- C. There is a need for men to be teachers, BUT they need to understand the burden and weight of responsibility associated with the work before jumping into the work. –
- D. Thus, he says "let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgement."
- E. Not to discourage those who might have a gift for teaching from doing so BUT to highlight the immense danger involved in becoming a teacher if you aren't fit for teaching.

II. A WARNING ON BECOMING TEACHERS

- A. Teachers receive a 'stricter' judgement
 1. Same judgement discussed in **James 2:12**
 2. Because of the danger of stumbling in word (:2) – it is more difficult to not stumble in word, the one who does not stumble in word is perfect (Mature)
 - a. We all stumble in many things (**1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 3:23**)
 - b. If anyone doesn't stumble in word, he is a perfect man
-So there is an added difficulty when we speak a lot
 3. Stricter = greater/larger (KJV = greater condemnation)
 - a. Stricter gives a different connotation than intended. (The NKJV translates this word everywhere else as greater/elder/more)
 - b. God does not show partiality – **Rom. 2:5-11, 16**

- c. God will judge every idle word – **Mt. 12:36**
 - Teachers have a greater judgement because they speak more
 - Every word spoken will be brought into judgement
- 4. Every teacher must understand and heed this warning before dedicating their life to teaching! There are eternal consequences.
- B. If you can bridle your tongue you are a perfect man
 - 1. Perfect = mature, complete, well rounded (**Js. 1:4; 2:22**)
 - 2. Teachers are to be mature
 - Of full-age with senses exercised – **Heb. 5:12-14**
 - Able to rightly divide the word – **2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1:5-7**
 - Live according to what they teach – **Rom. 2:21-24**
 - Teachers must grow in the word, lest they lead others astray
- C. If you can bridle your tongue you can bridle the body
 - 1. What we speak comes from the heart – **Lk. 6:45; Mt. 15:18-20**
 - 2. If you can control the tongue, your heart is right and you are mature – and control the body – you will behave properly
 - 3. Gives to examples to illustrate (**:3-5a**)
 - A bit in a horse's mouth; a rudder on a ship
- D. The tongue poses a great potential for destruction
 - 1. If you aren't mature and can't control your speech – you should not be a teacher
 - 2. See how great a forest a little fire kindles (**:5b**)
 - sometimes 1 word spoken can be a spark that sets a whole forest on fire – ruins your reputation, causes division in the church, contentions, etc.
 - He then continues with a discussion of the danger of the tongue and the damage the tongue can cause.

-----**James 3:6-12**-----

III. THE DIFFICULTY OF TAMING THE TONGUE

- A. The tongue described (**:6**)
 - 1. A fire (in keeping with what he said in :5)
 - 2. A world of iniquity
 - 3. So set among our members that it defiles the whole body
 - 4. Sets on fire the course of nature
 - 5. Is set on fire by hell!
 - This power to destroy and defile should caution us in becoming teachers!
- B. The tongue is more difficult to tame than wild animals (:7-8)
 - 1. Mankind has tamed all kinds of animals (**:7**)
 - 2. Man is unable to tame the tongue (**:8**)
 - a. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison
 - b. This must be hyperbolic speech
 - i. Else everyone's religion would be useless (**James 1:26**)
 - ii. Else no man could be mature (:2) -> no one could teach
 - iii. Else we couldn't heed the command to control our speech (**Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6**)
- C. Illustrates the difficulty of taming the tongue by pointing out a common inconsistency of some (:9-12)

1. Some bless God and curse man with the same tongue (:9-10a)
2. This ought not to be so (:10b)
3. The inconsistency illustrated (:11-12)
4. If our speech is bad, it is because our heart is bad (Mt. 12:33-37; Mk. 7:20-23)

Conclusion:

1. These things are spoken as a warning to those who would be teachers (:1)
2. But they apply to all – we must learn to control the tongue
3. We should seek the Lord's help in this as the psalmist did (Psalm 19:14; 141:3)