

Be Disciplined In Your Speech

Part #1 Introduction

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James 3:1-12

Review

We have seen that James exhorts believers to –

- Be Patient In Testing - James 1:2-4
- Ask For God's Wisdom When Facing Trials – James 1:5-8
- Be Focused On The Lord – James 1:9-11
- Be Strong In Temptation - James 1:12-18
- Be Doers of The Word – James 1:19-27
- Be Impartial Toward Others – James 2:1-13
- Be Sure You Have The Right Kind of Faith – James 2:14-26

Today we will look at a completely new exhortation

- **Be Disciplined In Your Speech – James 3:1-12**

Introduction

It is estimated that the average person says about thirty thousand words every day. (I know two or three people who exceed that number!) That is enough to make a good-sized book.

I found out an interesting bit of information as I was doing some reading in preparation for this message. “Scientists maintain that once a sound wave is set in motion, it continues on a never-ending journey, and that, if we had sophisticated enough instruments, each wave could be captured and reproduced at any time.”

There could come a day my friends, when every word spoken by any person who has ever lived could be retrieved!

The Christians James writes about in this chapter are having serious problems with their tongues. In a lifetime, each one of us fills a library with the words we have said. But let me present to you a thought that should be very sobering. God does not need any scientific instruments to know what we say. God hears EVERY WORD WE SPEAK and will judge us accordingly! Turn to **Matthew 12:36-37** “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

We have heard a great deal rhetoric recently about freedom of speech and freedom of the press. It has become sort of a sacred cow. It is used as a cloak to hide behind to justify some of the vilest language, intimidating speech, and threats you can imagine. Freedom speech is used to justify character assassination. One example is Sarah Palin. Freedom of the press in our day means that they can brainwash you according to the liberal viewpoint, and freedom of speech means that you can use vile language.

It might be allowed by the courts interpretation of our Constitution, but is it NOT ALLOWED BY OUR GOD! **“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”**

One preacher said what I feel like – “I would like for someone to grant us freedom of hearing. I have only one mouth, but I have two ears, and I think my ears ought to be protected as well as my mouth. We need freedom of hearing today as well as freedom of speech.”

Problems with the tongue are not new. The Christians that James wrote to were having tongue troubles! Earlier in his letter he had warned “...my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” **James 1:19**. He further told them to that anyone who claims to be religious but does not control their tongues is us deceived. His religion is a sham (**James 1:26**). The fact is, what you are will inevitably be revealed by what you say (**Matthew 12:34-35**). Ponder what this commentator said: **“A person’s speech is a reliable measure of his spiritual temperature, a monitor of the inner human condition.”**

James makes it clear that a mature believer has control over his tongue. He tells them they are to speak and act realizing they will be judged! **James 2:12** says, “So speak ye, and so do, **as they that shall be judged** by the law of liberty.”

- **The Outline of Our Study On The Tongue**

As we dig into chapter 3 we see that we see that the intention of James is to **STRESS** the importance of controlling our tongues and being disciplined in our speech. He does this by giving us **6 Pictures of the Tongue** which are divided into **3 Different Classifications** that reveal the three powers of the tongue.

- ✓ **The Power to Direct**

1) *A Bit* – v. 3

2) *A Helm (Rudder)* – v. 4

- ✓ **The Power to Destroy**

3) *A Fire* – v. 6

4) *A Poisonous Snake* – v. 8

- ✓ **The Power to Delight**

5) *A Fountain* – v. 11

6) *A Fig Tree* – v. 12

Today's Focus

- ✓ **The Power to Direct** – vs. 1-4

James 3:1-4 “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.”

Teachers hold a very powerful position of influence. In light of that, James decides to address them first. In **verse 1** we see the word *masters*. That is the translation of the Greek word διδασκαλοι didaskaloi (did-as'-kal-oi) and carries the idea of being an authoritative teacher.

Aparently, people were pushing hard to get themselves into spiritual leadership positions and teach likely for the reason the Pharisees did In **Matthew 23:5-8**. There was a proud ambition to be respected as a religious leader. Barnes say in his commentary - “The evil which the apostle seems to have referred to in this chapter, was a desire, which

appears to have prevailed among those to whom he wrote, to be public teachers, and to be such even where there was no proper qualification.”

It is a sad thing when immature Christians try to become teachers before they are ready. They think they have attained a great place of honor, when they have really asked for a more severe judgment from God!

James points that out in **James 3:1b** says, “...knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation [judgment].”

Sorenson makes this observation – “James’ advice is simple. Rather than advancing oneself as a teacher, we rather ought to be willing to listen. Far too often, there is a temptation to assume leadership when in reality we really don’t know what we are talking about. In many cases, God’s work would be better served if we were swift to hear and slow to speak. Just beneath the surface is an implied pride of life. Moreover, those who would exalt themselves, in this case to be a teacher (spiritual leader), would do well to remember unto whom much is given, much shall be required.”

The simple truth is those who teach must practice what they preach! Otherwise their teaching is hypocrisy! Those to teach the Word of God face stricter judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

But teachers and spiritual leaders are not the only ones who have troubles with their mouths! **James 3:2** says, “For in many things we **offend** all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a **perfect** man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.”

A key word here is offend which essentially has the thought to ‘**error**’ or to ‘**make mistakes**.’ The word translated as perfect means **mature**. Hence, James sets forth a profound principle – We all error in many things. However, if a man speaks and does not offend others, he is a mature man and able also to control his entire body.

Our prayer needs to be **Psalms 141:3-4** “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. *4* Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.”