

JAMES 3

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INTRODUCTION

A. THREE QUESTIONS:

1. Do Christians experience temptations and trials.
2. Do some Christians only profess faith in the Lord, without living it.
3. Do most Christians have difficulty, at least some of the time, controlling their tongue?

B. In James, Chapter Three James wrote about:

1. The challenge to control one's tongue.
 2. Warned the Christian about being a teacher, because of judgment.
 3. Illustrated who is truly wise and endowed with knowledge.
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Challenge To Control Tongue

A. We shall account to God for the way we use our tongue (3:1).

1. Jesus taught, "*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned*" (Matt. 12:37).
2. Paul wrote: "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying....*" (Eph. 4:29).

B. The man who can control his tongue has reached full spiritual maturity(3:2)

1. We all stumble (make mistakes) especially where the tongue is involved.
2. To control the tongue (we will never be perfect or sinless) is a sure indication of spiritual maturity.

C. The tongue is powerful and influential (3:3-8). James compares it to 3 things.

1. The tongue is like a bit we put into the horse's mouth. (3:3) By it we control the horse.
2. The tongue is like the rudder of a ship (3:4). Small yet controls a massive ship.
3. The tongue is also like a small fire (3:5). A small fire can grow and cause widespread damage, destroying vegetation, timber, animals, buildings, and human life.

D. The tongue, even though small in comparison to the entire human body, has great power and can be used to do great harm or great good.

1. *Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.* (Prov. 18:21).
2. With The Tongue Man Can:
 - a. Deceive an honest heart.
 - b. Discourage the spirit of a good person.
 - c. Destroy a reputation. OR....

3. WITH THE TONGUE MAN CAN:

- a. Enlighten the truth, (b) Encourage the good (c) Enhance a reputation.
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THE TONGUE IS...

- A. THE TONGUE IS AN UNRULY EVIL (3:6-8).
1. He can tame wild animals, to the point they are under his control.
 2. But the tongue, while it may be restrained, will always be dangerous.
 3. Hell becomes the reward of one who does not learn to control his tongue.
- B. ONE CAN BE HYPOCRITICAL in use of the tongue. (3;9-10).
1. Indian accused white man of speaking with “forked tongue”.
 2. Likewise it could be said of some Christians that they speak
 - a. Praising God on one hand...
 - b. And cursing men on the other.
 - c. We sing “We Praise Thee O God”...on Sunday, Profanity on Monday.
- C. THE TONGUE IS A MONITOR of one’s heart (3:11,12).
1. Speech indicates what is inside of one’s heart.
 2. A Pure heart.....or impure heart.
 3. *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*” (Matt. 12:34)
 4. Control is not **impossible**, but requires constant care!
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To Those Who Would Teach

- A. It is not just a blank statement telling us not to become teachers!
1. It appears that some desired the acclaim, but did not accept the responsibility.
 2. Those who teach indeed wield a strong influence upon their students.
 3. It was not James intention to discourage, but a warning to consider...Why did James give this imperative?
- B. FIRST, keep in mind that he wrote this to some whose sole motive was the desire for notoriety.
1. The one who teaches the gospel, is doing the right and good.
 2. One who teaches with selfish aims and the desire for exaltation among men will surely reap the displeasure of the Father.
- C. SECOND: James said that those who teach shall *receive the greater condemnation*.
1. Greater “judgment” (ASV).
 2. Those who have been teachers of his word will be judged more strictly than those who have not been teachers.
 3. The consequences of teaching false doctrine, or of living a hypocritical life are spiritually and eternally fatal (Matt. 18;6,7).
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WISDOM FROM ABOVE

- A. Just as one's speech is a true indicated of what is in one's heart, One's behavior is indicative of one's wisdom.
1. Wisdom is either from "above" that is from God.
 2. Or it is from and of the world. Worldly wisdom.
- B. TEST YOUR WISDOM:
1. *But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are there is confusion and every vile deed.* (3:14-16).
 2. *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.* (3:17-18).
- C. How desperately the world needs to see us as people who control our tongues and as a demonstration of the wisdom that is from above. And, oh, how we Christians need the influence that comes from seeing such exemplified in each other.
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