

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in James

*James 3*

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(All Scripture is from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.)

Greek Text – Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 28<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition

The **green** text is a literal word for word translation.

Today we start in James 3. We will look at two aspects of this verse. One expresses a concern about who is teaching in the churches, and the other concerns leadership, specifically Elders and Deacons.

The first verse clearly makes a distinction between teachers and non-teachers with the respect of accountability. This is an important distinction. In today's church-world, the position of teacher has been watered-down. This was not done to will ill-intent. The proliferation of teachers in churches is due to the demand. The challenge is that the demand over-rode the number of people who are actually called to teach. The response from the church is to publish material that can be facilitated by just about anyone. Denominational and Christian bookstores have shelves stocked with ready-made lesson plans. A person does not have to know the Bible; they just have to be able to read and present the lesson and lead a discussion. No real Bible knowledge or understanding is needed. Fortunately, most people who are utilizing these ready-made lessons do have some depth of knowledge. However, often times the lesson plans, in part, are generated to support the teachings of a particular denomination.

The fault lies with the lack of training of young people, and members in general to fill this role. The church needs to do a better job of assessing people's spiritual gifts and calling. To be an effective Bible teachers takes years.

Here is James 3:1...

## James 3:1-18

### Verse 1

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, ESV

Not many teachers to become brothers my,

Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί μου,

My brothers, not many become teachers, [more readable]

Not many brothers to become teachers

for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Know that greater judgement receive

εἰδότες ὅτι μείζον κρίμα λημψόμεθα. (Jas. 3:1 BGT)

Know that we receive greater judgement.

We now focus upon the second concern which this verse points

The difference in qualification between a Deacon and an Elder is that the Elder be able to teach. There are some denominations that use Deacons for the overall leadership (Overseers) of the church. They have no Elders. These churches claim they qualify Deacons under Scripture by citing 1 Timothy 3:1. However, the Deacon has no scriptural requirement to teach. Deacons are not Overseers. Therefore, these churches have people in place that oversee the church, but do not meet the scriptural requirement to teach (which is the requirement for Overseer/Elder). This is a serious problem. There is a huge difference in a person who can serve 'works' as compared to a person that can defend the church with Scripture!

**διάκονος, ου, ό, ή**—**1.** *servant* Matthew 20:26; 22:13; Mark 9:35; specifically *waiter* J 2:5, 9. *Agent* Romans 13:4; Galatians 2:17.—**2.** *helper* of people who render service as Christians—**a.** in the general service of God, Christ, or other Christians 2 Cor 6:4; 11:23; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 1:23, 25; 1 Timothy 4:6.—**b.** in official or semiofficial capacity Romans 16:1; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12.

There is a calling and spiritual maturity difference. Titus expounds upon the qualification for Elders.

### Titus. 1:5-11

<sup>5</sup> This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you--

<sup>6</sup> if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

<sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,

<sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

<sup>9</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

<sup>10</sup> For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party.

<sup>11</sup> They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

James associates a greater responsibility to teach. Note that not all teachers are Elders, but all Elders should be able to teach. When we teach the Word of God, we are teaching:

1. Eternal truths that God was and is and is to come.
2. The sovereign voice of God
3. Grace and peace on earth
4. The authority of God
5. The redemptive plan of God, that is His intent for mankind
6. The love sacrifice of God, that is His Cross
7. The heaven and hell of God, that is judgement

These are just to name of few. It is beyond words to detail all the accomplishments God makes through His called teachers and preachers

that actually proclaim His Word. When we proclaim God's Word to others, the power to change lives goes out from the teaching. History is full of men and women who taught God's Word, and countries, kings, and whole cultures fell or were preserved.

One of the best examples of transformation is when twenty-six year old King Josiah of Judah in about the year 628 BC ordered that the house of the Lord be repaired (2 Kings 22). During this work, Hilkiah the high priest reported to Shaphan the scribe that he had found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord. Shaphan then took the book to King Josiah and read it to him. After hearing the reading of the book of the Law, Josiah tore his clothes (2 Kings 22:11). Why did Josiah tear his clothes? 2 Kings 22:13 tells us.

<sup>13</sup> "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

Remember, this is after the total destruction and annihilation of the Northern county of Israel that had been carried out by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The book of the Law is the Law God gave to Moses during the Exodus of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the book of the Law was given to the Hebrew people about 700 years before the reign of Josiah. Josiah knew of the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon and all the kings following him who reigned over the northern county of Israel and the southern country of Judah. Therefore, he viewed a 1,400 year covenant history from Abraham to his life.

We now read some of the reforms Josiah brought forth after receiving the teaching from the Word of God in the form of the Law. Note that the Law as Josiah implemented it was for the purification of the covenant people and the land.

Read 2 Kings 22:11ff

James then transitions from his caution concerning teachers of God's Word to stumbling tongues. Teachers do speak, and therefore, we as teachers need to be cautious of what we say. Our goal is to not stumble.

### Eph. 4:11-15

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds **and teachers,**

<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

<sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

<sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

### Eph. 4:29-32 Paul address how we are to communicate

<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

<sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

### Main Topic: "Stumbling Tongue" outline

<sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways.

And if anyone does not stumble in what he says,

he is a perfect man,

able also to bridle his whole body

### Illustration One ~ Guiding Horses' Bits

<sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

### Illustration Two ~ Guiding Ship's Rudder

<sup>4</sup> Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

<sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

### Illustration Three ~ Firing Tongue of Hell

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

<sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.

The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

### Solution ~ Tamed the Tongue

<sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,

### Reality: Conclusion One ~ For Lost Man

<sup>8</sup> **but** no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

### Reality: Conclusion Two ~ For the Believer

<sup>9</sup> With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

### Illustrate Conclusion One ~ Same Mouth

<sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

### Illustrate Conclusion Two ~ Same Spring

<sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?

### Illustrate Conclusion Three ~ Same Tree

<sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs?

Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

### Challenging Solution ~ Wisdom and Understanding

<sup>13</sup> Who is **wise** and understanding among you? [Job 28:12 - 28](#)

By his good conduct  
let him show his works  
in the meekness of **wisdom**.

*Beatitude One: Blessed are the meek, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

### Things that Restrict Solution

<sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.

<sup>15</sup> This is not the **wisdom** that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

<sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

### Contrast Things that Restrict Solution with "From Above" Wisdom

<sup>17</sup> But the **wisdom** from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

**<sup>18</sup> And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**

### Application to Our Times

Now we look at what law governs our speech in secular society. In Texas, we have the Texas State Penal Code passed by the State legislature.

Reading section 42 we find laws governing many types of communication. The point to be made is that the Bible already teaches us how to communicate. Those of us who live under the Bible will not be subject to these laws. We obviously adhere to them as citizens, but these laws are not the reason we communicate the way we do. We are empowered by God's Holy Spirit and therefore, operate well within the boundaries of the State law. It is interesting to read section 42 and come to the knowledge of what the State deems as illegal communication. Yes, we live in a land that has free speech rights, but not all speech and or communication is legal. The best example is that we should all know that we cannot threaten harm to America's Chief Executive.

We should remember that are law code is based upon the Judeo-Christian code that obviously has the Bible as its foundation. Therefore, these state codes we read have their origin in the Bible.

### Texas State Penal Code

Sec. 42.01. DISORDERLY CONDUCT. (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly:

(1) uses abusive, indecent, profane, or vulgar language in a public place, and the language by its very utterance tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace;

(2) makes an offensive gesture or display in a public place, and the gesture or display tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace;

(3) creates, by chemical means, a noxious and unreasonable odor in a public place;

(4) abuses or threatens a person in a public place in an obviously offensive manner;

b) It is a defense to prosecution under Subsection (a)(4) that the actor had significant provocation for his abusive or threatening conduct.

Sec. 42.05. X DISRUPTING MEETING OR PROCESSION.  
(a) A person commits an offense if, with intent to



prevent or disrupt a lawful meeting, procession, or gathering, he obstructs or interferes with the meeting, procession, or gathering by physical action or verbal utterance.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

Acts 1973, 63rd Leg., p. 883, Ch. 399, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1974. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., Ch. 900, Sec. 1.01, eff. Sept. 1, 1994.

Sec. 42.055. FUNERAL SERVICE DISRUPTIONS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Facility" means a building at which any portion of a funeral service takes place, including a funeral parlor, mortuary, private home, or established place of worship.

(2) "Funeral service" means a ceremony, procession, or memorial service, including a wake or viewing, held in connection with the burial or cremation of the dead.

(3) "Picketing" means:

(A) standing, sitting, or repeated walking, riding, driving, or other similar action by a person displaying or carrying a banner, placard, or sign;

(B) engaging in loud singing, chanting, whistling, or yelling, with or without noise amplification through a device such as a bullhorn or microphone; or

(C) blocking access to a facility or cemetery being used for a funeral service.

(b) A person commits an offense if, during the period beginning three hours before the service begins and ending three hours after the service is completed, the person engages in picketing within 1,000 feet of a facility or cemetery being used for a funeral service.

(c) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

Sec. 42.07. HARASSMENT. (a) A person commits an offense if, with intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another, the person:

(1) initiates communication and in the course of the communication makes a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene;

(2) threatens, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;

(3) conveys, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury;

(4) causes the telephone of another to ring repeatedly or makes repeated telephone communications anonymously or in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another;

(5) makes a telephone call and intentionally fails to hang up or disengage the connection;

(6) knowingly permits a telephone under the person's control to be used by another to commit an offense under this section; or

(7) sends repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another.

(b) In this section:

(1) "Electronic communication" means a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic,

photoelectronic, or photo-optical system. The term includes:

(A) a communication initiated by electronic mail, instant message, network call, or facsimile machine; and

(B) a communication made to a pager.

(2) "Family" and "household" have the meaning assigned by Chapter 71, Family Code.

(3) "Obscene" means containing a patently offensive description of or a solicitation to commit an ultimate sex act, including sexual intercourse, masturbation, cunnilingus, fellatio, or anilingus, or a description of an excretory function.

(c) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor, except that the offense is a Class A misdemeanor if the actor has previously been convicted under this section.

### **Biblical World View of Speech**

The ability to speak, talk, and verbally communicate is the way God created us. Therefore, we keep in mind that the ability to speak is a gift from God and that we are accountable to Him as the One who gave the ability.

When you receive a gift from someone, most likely every time you use the gift you remember the one who gave you the gift. It may be a ring you wear or perhaps your wife remembers the washing machine you bought for an anniversary gift. The point is that we remember.

Moses could speak, but in Moses' mind he could not speak well enough to represent God. God overcame Moses' objection and appointed Aaron to be Moses' mouth-piece. This arrangement worked out well. God made His accomplishments even through the objections of Moses and to some degree his disability. The lesson to us is that God can work through us to communicate His purposes to another person. God works through our disabilities, whatever they may be. The biggest

disability we have is self-imposed sin that creates an impediment between the way God thinks and the way we think. This eventually comes out as we speak. We all have this challenge, because we are not perfect; we work through sin every day. This is why James is addressing the issue.

My training as a public servant encompassed the use of voice. The cadence in our voice, the audible level in our voice, the inflection in our voice, our actual word choice all package our ability to communicate. I can always tell when someone is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher. Every sentence is at a moderate pace, clear and concise with a tone of encouragement, even in the correction of a child. Conversely, as a police officer, responding to a weapons call, walking in a bar at midnight and ordering everyone to get their hands up and stand against the wall is not a time to use a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher tone of encouragement.

However, in teaching God's Word, we are, at times, called to be both third-grade teacher and God's voice of authority.