

JAMES (Part 3) (James 3)

~In his letter, James covers ways we can MATURE as Christians.

~Until we reach MATURITY, we will never be FRUITFUL.

~If we are to “bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit, and fruit that remains...we are going to have to out a premium on growing to a place of maturity in Christ.

~The first two chapters of James cover:

1.) Growth through TRIALS by “knowledge” of God’s word. (“Count it all JOY when you are tempted and tried...”)

2.) Putting that knowledge into action. (“Faith without works is dead”)

3.) Letting go of worldly prejudices. (Honor is the “key” of the Kingdom)

~Chapter 3 adds another layer to our Christian maturity by talking about how we use our words in how we teach and in how we generally speak to or about others.

~When you boil it down, James is saying that the **quality** and **contents** of our SPEECH is very revealing concerning how much we have let Godly WISDOM truly MATURE in us.

1. (James 3:1-2 NIV) “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.² We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.”

A. James is giving warning to those who would desire to be TEACHERS.

~He is pointing out that there are CHARACTER TRAITS in each of us that can “undermine” the MESSAGE that is being taught.

~Being CALLED and ANOINTED does not ensure that the DISCIPLINE that creates Godly CHARACTER will automatically be in operation.

~The GIFT is God given (You didn’t EARN it or deserve it...God did that)

~The DISCIPLINE that you put around your gift that ensure Godly character is the gift you give back to God.

B. We are all called to TEACH.

(Matt. 28:19-20) “Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

~Each of us are called to TEACH...but we must be careful that our LIVES do not undermine the MESSAGE that we are called to teach.

~Maturity is a key quality for those who would be the face of the Gospel.

C. Two key traits of those who would be teachers: HUMILITY and TEACHABILITY.

~These two traits are indispensable for those who would instruct others in the ways of Christ.

(Humility)—is the **absence of vanity or excessive pride**, willfully being “last.”

(Teachability)—is the **ability to learn by instruction**. (The moment you can no longer LEARN you can no longer LEAD)

2. Verses 3–12: James gives in-depth instruction on the “Power of the Tongue.”

~There is nothing else in the world that has the ability to do both GOOD and EVIL like the tongue.

~Nothing else has destroyed marriages, ruined friendships, and launched wars like the tongue.

~And yet it has the innate power bring forth LIFE and CREATE something out of nothing.

3. (Vs. 6) “And the tongue is a FIRE, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that is DEFILETH THE WHOLE body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

~The tongue has the power to DEFILE the WHOLE BODY.

(Matt. 15:18-20) “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man...”

~No matter what else that we might do that is GOOD...it can all be undone by an UNDISCIPLINED TONGUE.

4. (Vs. 7-8) “For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

~James is saying that it seems like we have “tamed” everything on earth...except for the tongue.

A. “But the tongue can NO MAN TAME.”

~He points out that we can never tame our tongue’s alone...we need the WISDOM of God to INSTRUCT our words...and GRACE of God to strengthen us to only speak His Word for that.

B. The “bit” in the horses mouth is attached to “reins” that are able to direct the whole horse.

~The question then becomes: “Who’s in control of the REINS?”

~If you MOUTH directs your WHOLE LIFE...who is in control of your mouth?

~“Where” do the WORDS we SPEAK come from? Who’s “words” are they?

~Do we ever consider the immense “consequences” of the words we speak?

~If you ever wonder HOW/WHY you've ended up where you are...check your words.

5. (Vs. 9-12) **“Therewith we bless God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.”**

~**James is pointing out the contradictory character of the tongue.**

~We must take serious note of the “DUALITY” of what comes out of our mouth’s.

A. The tongue can be used for the highest calling (to bless our God) and it can be used for the lowest evil (to curse men).

~On one hand we BLESS GOD...but on the other hand we CURSE MEN who are made in the “likeness” of God.

~We are trying to be fountains of blessing AND cursing.

~In those who are born again, it shouldn’t be said that **out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.**

B. “These things ought not to be so...”

~Our speech should be **consistently** glorifying to God.

~We shouldn’t use one vocabulary or one tone of speaking at church and a different one at home or on the job.

~Like a spring of water, our mouths shouldn’t **send forth fresh... and bitter from the same opening.**

C. “No spring yields both salt water and fresh...”

~James points to the ultimate **impossibility** of such a contradiction.

~If bad fruit and bitter water continue to come forth, it means that there is no contradiction.

~The tree is bad, and the spring is bad.

~The way we use our words with each other affects the nature of our praise to God.

~Our WORSHIP can be cancelled by our WORDS.

D. Jesus taught in (Matt. 12:34-37) that a man's words are a reliable revelation of his inner character.

~What we SAY can indicate what we ARE.

(Matt. 12:34-37) “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That **every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.** For by thy **words** thou shalt be justified, and by thy **words** thou shalt be condemned.”

~You can label a fig tree “Olive Tree” and that will not make it an olive tree.

~You can trim a fig tree to look like an olive tree, and that will not make it an olive tree.

~You can treat a fig tree like an olive tree, and that will not make it an olive tree.

~You can surround a fig tree with many olive trees, and that will not make it an olive tree.

~You can transplant that fig tree to the Mount of Olives, and that would not make it an olive tree.

6. (Vs. 13) “Who is a WISE man and endued with KNOWLEDGE among you? Let him SHOW out of good CONVERSATION his WORKS with meekness of wisdom.”

~James is talking about **the demonstration of a living FAITH in the presence of WISDOM.**

~In short, it is Godly WISDOM that shows us how to do GOOD WORKS.

A. “Who is wise...let him show by good conduct.”

~Wisdom is not mere head knowledge...Real wisdom and **understanding** will show in our lives, by our **good conduct**.

~In this sense wisdom and understanding are like faith; they are invisible, inner qualities. If a person considers himself to be **wise** or **understanding**, it is fair to expect that this invisible inner quality would show itself in regular life.

B. (Vs. 14-18) Highlight’s the CONTRAST between EARTHLY wisdom and Heavenly wisdom.

(Vs. 14-15) “If you have bitter envy and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth. The wisdom descended not from ABOVE, but is EARTHLY, sensual, and devilish.”

1.) **Earthly**—Having this life only in view.

2.) **Sensual**—Animal like, having for its object the gratification of the passions and animal appetites.

3.) **Demonic**—inspired by demons, and maintained in the soul by their indwelling influence.

4.) **Confusion and every evil thing**—This is the “fruit” of human, earthly wisdom.

~The wisdom of the world, the flesh, and the devil may be able to accomplish things, but always with the ultimate fruit of **confusion and every evil thing**.

C. (Vs. 17-18) “But the wisdom that is from ABOVE is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

1.) **His wisdom is first PURE.**

~It is the absence of any sinful attitude or motive.

2.) This wisdom is then PEACEABLE.

~This is one of the great words of character description in the NT...”peaceable.”

(Rom. 12:18) “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at PEACE with EVERYONE.”

3.) This wisdom is GENTLE.

~This is the ability to extend to others the kind consideration we would wish to receive ourselves.

4.) This wisdom is WILLING TO YIELD.

~Not stubborn nor obstinate; of a yielding disposition in all things.

~True wisdom is not rigid but is willing to listen and skilled in knowing when wisely to yield.

5.) This wisdom is full of MERCY.

~It does not judge others strictly on the basis of the law, but will extend a generous hand full of mercy.

~This wisdom knows that the same measure of mercy we grant to others is the same measure God will use with us.

(Matt. 7:2) “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

6.) This wisdom is full of GOOD FRUITS.

~This wisdom can be seen by the fruit it produces.

~It isn’t just the inner power to think and talk about things the right way; it is full of good fruits.

7.) This wisdom is without PARTIALITY.

~It prefers others...and it doesn't prefer one above another.

8.) This wisdom is without HYPOCRISY.

~Without pretending to be what it is not; acting always in its own character; never working under a mask.

~Seeking nothing but God's Glory and using no other means to attain it than those of his own prescribing.

