

James 3:1 Teachers

The New Testament places significant emphasis on the role of teachers within the church, highlighting both their responsibilities and the seriousness of their position. Specifically, three key factors include integrity and dignity (**Titus 2:7-8**) ensuring their lives reflect the teachings they impart. And, the teacher's scriptural foundation: all teaching should be rooted in Scripture.

James 2:26: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**teachers**" or in the Greek, "didaskaloi" meaning, "instructor; master of knowledge"; "strictness" or "krima" means, 'judgment'.
- **Literal Interpretation:** Don't be in any rush to become an instructor, my friends. Teaching is highly responsible work; instructors are held to the highest judgment.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word.

I. THE "WARNING" (v 1)**A. "LET NOT MANY OF YOU BECOME TEACHERS"**

1. Note carefully:
 - a. James does not say, "Let not many of you BE teachers"
 - b. But rather, "Let not many of you BECOME teachers"
2. This passage is not just a rebuke of those who try to BE teachers before they are ready, but a warning that many should not even BECOME teachers in the future!
3. It is a mistake to believe that EVERYONE should become a teacher at some point in their service to Christ!
 - a. Paul illustrated time and again that the body of Christ has many members, and not all members have the same function!
 1. To the saints at Rome - **Romans 12:3-8**
 2. To the church at Corinth – **1 Cor. 12:12-31** (note esp. **v. 29**, where Paul with a rhetorical question implies that not all are to be teachers)
 - b. Peter likewise taught that God's grace toward us is "**manifold**" (multi-faceted) and that we should exercise our respective abilities accordingly - **1 Peter 4:10-11**
4. In view of what Paul, Peter, and James wrote, we should be careful before we apply **Hebrews 5:12-14** to mean that EVERYONE should one day be teachers (the author of Hebrews may have been writing to a select audience, whom he knew ought to have been teachers)

B. WHY MANY SHOULD NOT BECOME TEACHERS...

1. Teachers shall receive "**a stricter judgment**"
 - a. There is a grave responsibility involved in teaching others
 - b. We can lead people to TRUTH - but we just as easily lead them to ERROR!

Reverend Tony Raker

Grace Evangelical Free Church, 718 E. Queen Street, Strasburg, VA 22657

tonyraker@yahoo.com / www.graceevfreechurchva.org

- c. Just as with elders (**Hebrews 13:17**), those who teach will be held accountable if they mislead others!
- 2. Because we all "**stumble in many things**" (**James 3:2**)
 - a. Everyone has faults, and with many people the improper use of the tongue is a major one
 - b. But it takes spiritual maturity ("**a perfect man**") not to stumble in word!

II The Teacher

A. Teachers who claim righteousness but lack it

- 1. The scribes and Pharisees were not righteous even while claiming righteousness (**Matthew 5:20**)
- 2. Jesus rebukes them as **blind guides** (**Matthew 15:14**)
- 3. **Nicodemus example:** Jesus holds Nicodemus accountable as a teacher of Israel (**John 3:10**)
- 4. Conclusion: a teacher of spiritual truth should know spiritual truth—hence James' warning (**James 3:1**)

B. Teaching incorrectly and hypocrisy

- 1. Teachers are responsible for how their teaching impacts others
- 2. If a teacher teaches wrongly, listeners may stumble
- 3. If a teacher lives inconsistently with what he teaches, he becomes a hypocrite and faces additional judgment

C. How believers can teach well (Paul)

- 1. Paul urges to teach one another, but teaches that preparation matters:
 - a. Let the **word of Christ dwell richly** in you (**Colossians 3:16**)
- 2. Teaching must be aligned with the Lord's authority:
 - a. Do everything in the **name of the Lord Jesus** (**Colossians 3:17**)
- 3. This alignment helps prevent hypocrisy in life and teaching

D. God's design: be before you tell

- 1. James' warning serves as a reminder to align with God's design
- 2. The priority: **walk according to His design** before trying to instruct others on how to walk

E. Paul's parallel argument: consistency between teaching and practice

- 1. Paul addresses people confident they can guide others (**Romans 2:19-20**).
- 2. He exposes contradictions:
 - a. If you correct others, do you teach yourself?
 - b. If you condemn stealing, do you steal? (**Romans 2:21**)
 - c. If you condemn adultery, do you commit adultery? (**v. 22**)
 - d. If you boast in the law, do you dishonor by breaking it? (**v. 23**)
- 3. Point: everyone is guilty in some way; teachers face stricter judgment
- 4. James: all are guilty, but teachers face greater accountability

F. Final exhortation: guarding both life and teaching

- 1. Teaching is serious; what you teach and how you live both matter
- 2. Timothy's challenge: **guard yourself and your teaching** (**1 Timothy 4:16**)

➤ **Conclusion:** In whatever teaching role I have, am I living up to God's standards?