



James 3:1 (NKJV)

**3 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

- The book of James is really an intimate book written to believers
- 8 times he refers to my brothers
- 3 more times he refers to them as my beloved brothers
- 4 times he refers to them simply as brothers
- So James is speaking to matters of the heart and really the foundational matter is walking the talk, living out what you believe, putting your faith into action
- It's from this place of being a doer of the Word that James then segues into the topic of leadership
- Paul says, let not many of you become teachers, in the Greek it's actually masters and it refers to the equivalent of being a rabbi
- Paul was a rabbi, a teacher... Jesus was called rabbi or teacher
- Our equivalent would be pastor
- The word become literally means assume or presume
- Thus Paul is saying... let not many of you presume to be pastor / teachers or assume you're a pastor / teacher
- Because those who have been given the responsibility of being a pastor / teacher will receive a stricter judgment from God... why?
- Because a Pastor / Teacher is responsible to speak the truth, to teach what God's word says... not quote a commentary or a book
- I can't listen to a message by someone or look up something on google and teach it because I agree with it... I must be a student of the Word
- God holds me responsible to represent Him accurately
- Secondly, I am under stricter judgment because what I say affects many lives and I'm responsible to God
- Sometimes the responsibility is so great that any honest teacher would admit there are times they've said to God... send someone else
- It's a responsibility that can't be taken lightly
- Third, I am under stricter judgment because being a pastor / teacher is not about giving a good study... it's about being a doer of the Word
- The real test of a teacher isn't what he says, it's what his family says
- The extent of a person's ministry isn't the size of his church, it's the depth of his family life... do you live what you preach



- If you consider that a teacher is responsible for every word he speaks, you wouldn't want to stand in front of people and teach them

James 3:2–5 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

<sup>4</sup> Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

<sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

- The Bible says in the multitude of words there is sin...
- Isaiah said, let my words be few
- Solomon said the wise hold their tongues
- James uses 3 illustrations concerning the power of the tongue
- A Bit that is put in a horses mouth that can turn their entire body
- The rudder of a ship that can steer this huge ship
- And a little spark that causes a forest fire
- If you can learn to control what you say, James says you're a perfect or spotless man

James 3:5–8 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. <sup>8</sup> But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

- James says the tongue has the capacity to defile the whole body, to set a fire that will accomplish the purpose of hell
- The word used for hell is the word Gehenna and it speaks of the Hinnom Valley in Jerusalem
- It was a place where trash was burned and the smoldering smoke could be seen... that's what our tongues are like when the garbage in our hearts is set on fire



James 3:9–12 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup> Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

- James brings the issue of faith into everyone's comfort zone
- He says it's inconsistent for a believer to worship God and curse people
- It's out of place, it shouldn't be
- If you are truly born again, if there is a fresh spring inside you, then only fresh water should be flowing out of you... refreshing water
- Not salt water, poisonous water

James 3:13–15 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that his works are done* in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

- Now James is getting extremely practical
- If you claim to be a pastor / teacher, claim to be wise, claim to understand the ways of God... let your actions be done in the meekness of wisdom
- But if you are bitter because you didn't get your opportunity
- If you're envious because someone has what you want... speaking of a ministry position
- Don't boast and lie against the truth claiming to be some great teacher
- The wisdom you're living your life by is earthly... it's worldly, it's sensual... emotionally charged and ultimately it's demonic
- This is why I have a real problem with the Word of Faith teachings about fulfilling your destiny, being the best you, go bigger and higher and greater for God... because it's boasts too much about me and my call and not enough about walking in meekness and simply serving God

James 3:16–18 (NKJV)



<sup>16</sup> For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup> Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

- Vs. 16... I use this as a diagnostic tool
- When I see confusion, worldliness, sensuality, demonic activity... it's because there is envy and self-seeking
- But where God is at work... it's pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy, there's lots of good fruit, no partiality, no my tribalism, no hypocrisy... rather there is a peaceful environment

James 4:1–3 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

- Again, I use this as a diagnostic
- Wherever I see fighting, quarrels, bickering or the more acceptable form of Christian hatred... the cold war where no one talks
- The problems is either lust... you want something really bad and you can't have it
- Murder and Covetousness (you want something someone else has that you're willing to kill for it)
- Basically lust, murder and covetousness is at the root of fighting and war
- Yet Jesus taught... ask and it will be given to you
- So James echoes his half brother by saying... you do not have because you do not ask
- And you do not receive when you do ask because you ask for the wrong reasons... out of lust, murder and covetousness... to spend it on your own pleasures
- That is a prayer God can't answer

James 4:4–6 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the



world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? <sup>6</sup> But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*”

- Now I want you to see this verse in it's context
- Most preachers make this about humility and pride
- God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble... but the context of this verse is friendship with God
- It takes a proud heart to believe there is something better or more satisfying than God
- It takes an arrogant person to commit adultery...
- Thinking they can do whatever they want believing there will be no consequences for their actions
- It takes a proud person to believe they can make it through life without God, without the Holy Spirit
- But the one who realizes they can't do it without God... God gives grace

James 4:7–10 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

<sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom.

<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

- Since grace goes to the humble... submit to God
- Resist the devil means to stand against the devil and he will flee
- So you have the two choices that every Christian has... draw near to God and stand against the devil or resist God and draw near to the devil
- Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts... how do you do that?
- The only way to be clean, to be purified is to receive grace... which goes back to vs. 7... submit to God, surrender to God and receive grace
- A man who is not surrendered is double minded... can't make up his mind
- Again... a diagnostic tool... when people are indecisive in their lives it's because they're not submitted to God
- Basically James is pointing out what Matthew 5 tells us... blessed are those poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn



- Lament and mourn and weep... recognize how poor you are without God and as you do... God will lift you up
- People who struggle with addiction believe they have the power to live clean, but they don't... that's pride
- It's only when they accept they are powerless, naked, poor and needy
- That's when God's power is unleashed and He lifts us up

James 4:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup> There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

- When you judge a brother, it is evidence that you are under the law
- The law is the standard of judgment
- Under grace, there is no condemnation, no judgment... only mercy
- And if you place yourself in a position to judge someone else, then you are putting yourself above the law, above the person you are judging to judge the law
- A doer of the law is under the law, a judge is above the law
- James goes on to say... there is only one Lawgiver... Jesus
- Jesus is able to save and destroy... meaning, He is the only one qualified to judge
- We are not qualified to judge because we've broken the law
- We deserve judgment, so how can I who deserves judgment pass judgment on you?

James 4:13–16 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; <sup>14</sup> whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup> Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

- Verses 11-12 address the problem of playing God in the lives of others by judging them



- Verses 13-16 address the problem of playing God over my own life
- We like to make our plans, choose our careers, pick who we're going to marry, even make decisions about how and where we're going to live without considering God at all
- We assume that we're going to live long enough to retire
- We assume that we're going to get that scholarship for our kids if we sacrifice going to church so they can play club sports
- We never consider the fact that the God who made us created us for purpose and the only way we will discover that purpose is to commit to following Jesus
- So we make our plans and ask God to bless our plans
- Faith has a totally different point of view
- Faith goes... what does God want me to do in this situation?
- Faith recognizes that today is a gift and if the Lord wants me to wake up, I'll have another day
- But to declare my plans, to boast about what I'm going to do is arrogant because I don't have the power to deliver on my word...
- I'm dependent on God for everything
- To deny that is evil

**James 4:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

- How do we stop playing God?
- It takes humility that flows from genuine faith
- First I have to recognize the right thing to do... which is to surrender my life to Jesus Christ
- Second, I have to start doing the right thing... which means to obey God and that takes submission to God
- As long as I'm calling the shots I'm not humbled before God
- Humility positions me to look for and listen to Jesus

**James 5:1-3 (NKJV)**

**5** Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!* <sup>2</sup>Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

<sup>3</sup>Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness



against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

- In Chapter 5 James addresses the rich who have gained their riches through unethical means
- Their riches testify against them... they didn't receive the blessing from God, they ripped people off or took what didn't belong to them

James 5:4–6 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

- The word fraud refers to depriving someone through deceit
- Notice the motives... to live in pleasure and luxury, to fatten your hearts, to build their kingdom
- Notice the tactics... to condemn, murder the just (includes character assassination, slander and gossip)...
- With a goal to undermine others in order to build their kingdom
- James says the just does not resist you... why? Because they are just, they trust in the Lord

James 5:7–8 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup> You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

- Now James is coming to the conclusion of his instructions to the believing Jews who are scattered all over the known world
- Because we are not God, because we are walking by faith, because we are doers and not hearers of the word, because we are righteous
- Be patient until the coming of the Lord... relax, don't get uptight
- The Lord is coming
- He uses the illustration of a farmer who waits for the fruit to come





- Most of the farming in Israel is dry farming... which means they are dependent on the rain to water the crops... there is no irrigation system
- The early rains would come in November and after the early rains they would plant their crops
- There would be a period of dryness in December and January that would give the crops time to grow
- The latter rains would begin in February or March which would give the crops a final push to harvest
- The Lord is a good farmer... He waits for the former and the latter rains because He is waiting for the precious fruit which is the time that will come when Jesus returns
- The former rain represents the dispensation of the law that pointed man to his need for Jesus
- The latter rain refers to the New Covenant of grace that is marked by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit... we're in the latter rain time
- So be settled in your heart... don't allow the world to move you... the Lord is at hand

James 5:9–11 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup> My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. <sup>11</sup> Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

- In light of the Lord's return... don't grumble against one another
- It literally means to sigh or to complain
- Why? Because the Lord is at hand, the Judge is at the door and you don't want to be caught pretending to be the Judge of the earth – that's pride
- He gives the example of the prophets who prophesied with tears in their eyes the coming judgment to those who would not turn to the Lord
- He gives the example of Job who lost everything, had every reason to complain, but in the end the Lord blessed him with a greater blessing than when he was alive because the Lord is compassionate and merciful

James 5:12 (NKJV)



<sup>12</sup> But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and *your* “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.

- Guys especially like to make big promises... just keep your word

James 5:13–18 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

- Notice the power of prayer... faith is quick to pray
- Faith doesn't try to figure things out, it just goes straight to God
- When you're sick... go to God, get prayer from believers
- If you've sinned... go to God, receive forgiveness
- If you've messed up, admit it and get prayer that you might be healed
- Because prayer works... prayer can stop the rain and prayer can release rain... so take everything to God prayer

James 5:19–20 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup> Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, <sup>20</sup> let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

- This is the ministry of reconciliation... pointing people back to Jesus
- That means going to them, talking with them, praying with them and showing them where they've gone wrong using God's Word
- Then encouraging them to get back on track and keep going
- No condemnation, no judging, in fact covering a multitude of sins...
- Faith will lead you to go after those who wander from the truth