

Women's Bible Study

October 31, 2018

Taming the Tongue

James 3: 1-12

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Q - Why should we hesitate before we presume to be a teacher? What about Christian teachers? In what ways do we teach?

A- A teacher has great influence, he will be held more accountable. (NIV Notes)

Matthew 23: 1-12 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them."

"Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they

love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

"But, you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

"By the seat of Moses, we are to understand authority to teach the law. Moses was the great teacher of the Jewish people; and the scribes, etc., are here represented as his successors." (Adam Clarke Commentary)

[Romans 2:21](#) you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

[Matthew 12: 33-37](#) "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word

they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Q – How do we evaluate our hearts?

James 3:2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

Kasal is the Hebrew word for stumble; meaning to falter, overthrown, ruined and weak. It is often used figuratively to describe the consequences of divine judgment on sin. (Strong's Concordance) **What causes us to stumble?**

Aitiama is the Greek word for fault; meaning cause, accusation or motive. (Strong's Concordance) **What is our motivation for striving to be like God?**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “perfect” as being entirely without fault or defect: flawless, expert, pure, lacking in no essential detail, mature and complete. Teleios is the Greek word meaning brought to its end, finished; consummate human integrity and virtue; men full grown. (Strong's Greek Dictionary)

Since the tongue is so difficult to control, anyone who controls it perfectly gains control of himself in all other areas of life as well. (NIV Study Notes)

Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Ephesians 4: 22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Q – According to Ephesians 4, what is God’s goal for us?

A- God’s goal for us is holiness and righteousness like His. Christ sets up the high ideal of perfect love so that we should be growing toward it. (NIV Study Notes)

Q -In what ways should we be growing toward holiness and righteousness?

A - Pray for each other; pray for the grace to turn our tongues over to God’s control; thank the Lord for providing the power to control what we cannot. Confess and ask forgiveness for ways in which we have verbally abused people who have been made in God’s likeness. (Life Change Series on James)

Romans 3:9-20 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” Their

feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law; so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

“Their throats are open graves” (Expressing the corruption of the heart). The tongue follows the heart.

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

1John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Psalm 39:1 I said, “I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence.”

Proverbs 10:19 When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.

Proverbs 10: 31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out.

**Q- In John 8:44 Jesus says that Satan is “the father of lies.”
Does this mean that Satan is responsible for our evil words?**

A -John 8:47 “He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

James 3: 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

“Though the bit is a small thing - so the body is controlled by the tongue. He who has a proper control over his tongue can govern his whole body, as he who holds a bridle governs and turns about the horse. (Albert Barnes Commentary)

James 3:4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

Q- How is our tongue like the horse’s bit or a ship’s rudder?

A - The tongue can misdirect our course in life. It is but a small muscular organ in the body, but it can do great harm.

Psalm 32:9 Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

James 3: 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

Psalm 12: 3,4 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue that says, “We will triumph with our tongues; we own our lips –who is our master?”

Psalm 73: 8,9 They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

James 3:6 The tongue is also a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire and is itself set on fire by hell.

Q-Who do you follow?

John 8:47 “He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”

“The snares into which men are sometimes led by the tongue are insufferable to themselves and destructive of others. It setteth on fire the course of nature. The affairs of mankind and of societies are often thrown into confusion, and all is on a flame, by the tongues of men. Some read it, all our generations are set on fire by the tongue. There is no age of the world, nor any condition of life, private or public, but will afford examples of this. It is from some diabolical designs, that men’s tongues are inflamed. The devil is expressly called a liar, a murderer, an accuser of the brethren; and, whenever men’s tongues are employed in any of these ways, they are set on fire of hell.”

(Matthew Henry Commentary)

Proverbs 16:27 An ungodly man digs up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire. Everything his fiery mouth touches is set on fire, and the fire spreads.

Proverbs 26:20 Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down

James 3:7-8 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

Psalm 140: 3 They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's; the poison of vipers is on their lips.

James 3: 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

Q -Why is this wrong?

A -Since man has been made like God, to curse man is like cursing God. (NIV Study Notes)

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

1 Corinthians 11: 7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

James 3: 10-12 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same springs?

My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Matthew 7: 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

Q-James warns us that we are revealed by our tongue and that our tongue has tremendous potential for evil. What kind of evidence determines whether we are walking in obedience?