

JAMES 3
Extra material

WISDOM TAMES THE TONGUE (James 3:1-12)

All of us are teachers in one sense, especially parents.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

Pray for our families, especially the fathers, that they would be diligent to teach their children God's Word.

Notice that in James 3:1, James uses that little word *we*. He is including himself in his own teaching. Everyone who teaches, including those who wrote the Scripture, fall under verse 1.

A couple of other passages that deal with our tongue are found in Psalms 64:2-3; 140:1-3.

Isaiah saw the Lord in all his splendor and majesty. He saw the seraphim surrounding the throne of God singing their song of praise:

And one called to another and said:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”*

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

Isaiah 6:3-5

When Isaiah stood before the throne of the holy, pure, majestic God, he immediately realized he was a man of *unclean lips*, his mouth was foul, his speech had been used for evil purposes, his words were corrupt.

WISDOM LIVES BY GOD'S WISDOM (James 3:13-18)

The word *good* means “lovely, attractive, wholesome, full of beauty and worth.” Other things in Scripture which are *good* are:

- good fruit (Matthew 12:33)
- good soil (Matthew 13:23)
- good seed (Matthew 13:24)
- good Shepherd (John 10:11)
- good works of the Father (John 10:32)

The answer to the question in verse 13 could serve as the theme to James. This is something he has said several times already (James 1:22; 2:17, 26; 3:13).

There is no deeper teaching in Scripture than the gospel of Christ. We never go beyond the gospel, we simply learn how it affects every aspect of our lives. The challenge of James is for us to live the gospel. *Who is wise and understanding among you?* Everyone who is a follower of Christ should be able to raise their hands and say, “I am” to James’s question.

We prove that we are wise and have understanding by the way we live. Biblical wisdom and understanding emphasizes how we live, not what we know. There’s a lot of knowledgeable people we aren’t wise. Someone may be a five time champion on Jeopardy, but that doesn’t mean that they are understanding. Someone could quote the entire Bible and know every answer on a theology quiz, could be an Deacon, Elder, or pastor, but still not be wise or understanding.

Whatever our hearts are set on will be seen in our lives.

Another means to receive God’s wisdom is to ask Him to grant it (James 1:5). This was covered by another sermon, so I’d encourage you to ask for a CD or go to the church’s website and download it. Suffice to say that this is a promise of God. If we lack wisdom, and we all do, then we need to ask God and He will grant it to us. A son or daughter of God who is in Christ who comes to Him asking for wisdom will without fail receive it.

If we tend toward impurity, the Lord wants us to ask Him to make us pure. If we tend toward being inconsiderate, the Lord wants us to ask Him to make us gentle with others. If we tend to struggle with being diligent to follow His Word, then He wants us to ask Him to help us be unwavering to the truth. And so it goes. And He will do it. I don’t know how or when or under what circumstances, but we have His guaranteed promise that He will. The prayer that the Lord loves most is when we ask Him to make us a holy people.

The Word of God has a sharp contrast between the man’s wisdom, which is wisdom from below, and God’s wisdom, the wisdom that comes from above.

MAN'S WISDOM

earthly
unspiritual
demonic
produces sin

GOD'S WISDOM

heavenly
spiritual
godly
produces holiness