

Sermon or Lesson: James 3:1-2 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Teachers - Required Excellence In Modeling The Word

INTRO: For those of us who have taught a Bible study group, did you quickly notice and perhaps discover the hard way that the listeners in your group seem to watch you with really big magnifying glasses and powerful binoculars? Why do group listeners examine and critique speakers so intensely? Probably because they want to determine if the speaker is genuine or fake, which gives or removes credibility to what the speaker is verbally promoting.

God, too, has major concerns about the integrity of the character of those who teach His Word. Let's see what He has to say about this in James 3:1-2.

READ: James 3:1-2

[Lesson Question: What are these verses saying about God's requirements for those who teach the Word?]

SECTION POINT: Teachers of the Word will be more strictly judged to teach the Word properly.

- - For those who teach the Word, God holds them to a higher level of expectations, of scrutiny, of measurement standards, of accountability, and of responsibility.
 - - Merely hearing the Word (v.1:22), believing the Word (v.2:17), speaking the Word (v.2:12), and teaching the Word (v.3:1) are not enough for teachers. In God's eyes, teachers of the Word need to thoroughly be doing what it says (v.3:2), especially because they are promoting the Word and instructing others how to live the Word.
 - - As previously stated in verse 2:12, here in verse 3:1 is repeated the reality that teachers are going to be judged for their failures to speak (or teach) the Word properly in conjunction with living (or doing) the Word properly.
 - - Teaching the Word and then hypocritically not acting in accordance to it will certainly be "more strictly judged".
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In the Greek in the beginning of verse 2, the word "for" (Strong's #1063; omitted in the *NIV*) indicates that verse 2 contains an explanation as to why not many people should become teachers of the Word.

[Lesson Question: What is the meaning of the explained reason in verse 2?]

SECTION POINT: Teachers of the Word additionally will be more strictly judged on how they personally speak and live in accordance to the Word they are teaching.

- - "For" or because "we all stumble in many ways" means not very many people should become teachers of the Word because they will not acceptably meet and pass the higher level of standards that will be used to judge teachers of the Word.
 - - Even though we all sin in many ways, teachers of the Word will be held to the high standard of not stumbling in what he/she says, i.e. not verbally tripping or falling into verbal sin. (Strong's #4417)
 - - Consequently, if such a person is consistently successful at not sinning verbally, then that person possesses spiritual maturity, and thus the ability to properly and successfully maintain godly self-control, self-discipline, and righteousness in the other areas of living.
 - - So the advice being given here is that each person should carefully consider whether to become a teacher of the Word, being very sure he/she has the spiritual maturity to meet God's high standards in all areas of his/her life, and particularly in speaking and in living the Word. i.e. The teacher of the Word needs to comprehensively be a consistent excellent role model of how to live the Word.
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BIG IDEA: God will more strictly judge teachers of the Word, that they **must excel at speaking, living, and teaching in accordance to the Word.**

IMPLICATIONS:

- - Additionally, it is critical for the teacher to live what he/she is teaching because he/she is visibly in front of those who are being taught and thus by default is demonstrating by his/her life how the teaching is to be lived. So in the case of being a teacher, there is an additional natural dynamic occurring of being a leader, for which there will be greater accountability for how and in what direction the leading is being done.
 - - This passage implies that teachers need to teach accurately what the Word says and not what they say or what they want the Word to say.
 - - This passage implies that teachers are to teach in a way that facilitates change towards godly living in those who hear, i.e. application-al, doing what it says (v.1:22). Teaching the Word without applications is fostering exactly what is being strongly opposed in James.
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APPLICATIONS:

- - For every one of you who in some manner teaches the Word, are you doing what you are teaching? Are you doing it with consistent excellence?

- - Knowing that God is holding you teachers of the Word to an unusually high standard, do you strive to ensure every part of your thinking, speaking, and living is righteous before God? Are there any sinful areas remaining in your life that you still need to "keep" "in check" (v.2)? God insists that you clean them out as well, so why not do that today.
 - - Are you accurately teaching what the Word is actually saying and not other things that people say or you say? Do you exert the time and effort to adequately research and ascertain the appropriate meaning of the Scripture verses you are teaching?
 - - Are you framing the teaching of the Word in ways that include, emphasize, and facilitate its application in your listeners' lives, so that they can become doers of the Word and not be merely listeners of the Word?
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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