



## The Power of the Pattern Pt 2: “Judged with Greater Strictness”

August 2, 2015

### Text: James 3:1

- *Jas 3:1 ESV* Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that **we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.** (Emphasis mine)
- *Jas 3:1 KJV* My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

### From Last Week:

1. Saints, I cannot even tell you how much last week’s notes mean to me. It’s off the scale in my heart.
2. Like many of you, my desire is to simply please our Lord. Truly, “*May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.*” *Psa 104:34 ESV*
3. I’m desperate, literally desperate, to “...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. *Col 1:10 ESV*”
4. As we said last week, there is much to say about “the pattern” and our call to be a “pattern house.” The goal first and foremost though, is to “please the one who enlisted” us as soldiers in His army, the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Tim 2:4)
5. As we said, “the pattern” Paul spoke about (“***Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.***” 2 Ti 1:13 (emphasis mine)), can simply be defined as:
  - The fundamental *doctrines, expressions, and traditions* given to the Church by Christ through the New Testament writers.
  - “Who Christ intended His church to be, what He intended it to teach, and the way He designed it to operate. All of this is clearly illustrated in the New Testament.”
6. We also said last week that we are no longer uncomfortable with our call to “pattern” ourselves according to God’s instructions, and that our desire is to “build according to the pattern, loving deeply and sacrificially for His glory.”
7. But there is also another motivation, one I believe is also thoroughly biblical and honorable: the **Fear** of the **Lord**. More on this below...

### Judged with Greater Strictness

1. In our text, James is about to explain the “power of the tongue,” if you will, and the responsibility of every believer to tame that power.
2. However, before he does so he admonishes and **warns** the brothers who would “become teachers,” as the “power of their tongues” can be particularly damaging.
3. Although some look at the passage differently, here are a few of my favorite commentators on this verse:

#### James Adamson:

If I am a teacher, I am at least likely to receive a greater condemnation. Why? Is it because God expects a higher standard from teachers than from others? If so, why? James does not say. Is it because the damage done to others by my sins is greater? Possibly; but James does not say so. Is it because my sins are apt to be more numerous?

The logic of the passage is better preserved if we take James to be saying that teachers, all teachers, are prone, very prone, to sin; for the tongue is preeminently uncontrollable and a treacherous source of evil.

The main thought in vv.1-12 is the greater responsibility of teachers and the extremely dangerous character of the instrument which they have to use. If every idle word will be weighed at the Judgment (Matt 12:36), how much more the utterances of the teacher?

### Expositor's Bible Commentary:

The argument is simple and plain: "Some of us must teach. All of us frequently fall. Teachers who fall are more severely judged than others. Therefore, do not many of you become teachers."

In what sphere is it that we most frequently fall? Precisely in that sphere in which the activity of teachers especially lies--in speech. "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man." St. James is not thinking merely of the teacher who never makes a mistake, but of the man who never sins with the tongue. There is an obvious, but by no means exclusive, reference to teachers, and that is all. To every one of us, whatever our sphere in life, the saying comes home that one who offends not in word is indeed a perfect man.

### William McDonald:

The subject is introduced by a warning against the hasty desire to be a teacher of the word of God. Although the tongue is not specifically mentioned, the underlying thought is that one who uses his tongue in teaching the Scriptures assumes added responsibility before God and man. The words "**Let not many of you become teachers**" may be paraphrased: "Do not become unduly ambitious to be a teacher." This should not be interpreted as a prohibition against the use of his gift by one who has actually been called of God to teach. It is a simple warning that this ministry should not be undertaken lightly. Those who teach the Word of Truth will receive heavier **judgment** if they fail to practice what they teach.

It is a great responsibility to teach the Bible. The teacher must be prepared to obey what he sees in the word. He can never hope to lead others beyond what he himself has practiced. The extent of his influence on others will be determined by how much he himself has progressed. The teacher begets others in his own image; he makes them like himself. If he dilutes or explains away the clear meaning of any Scripture, he hinders the growth of his students. If he condones sin in any form, he fosters lives of unholiness. No other book makes such claims on its readers as the NT. It calls for total commitment to Jesus Christ. It insists that He must be Lord of every phase of the believer's life. It is a serious matter to teach from such a book!

4. I read the text similarly. Not only must any person not assume to be "masters" of another's spiritual walk (one view), but the *didaskolos* (or teacher in this verse) must understand that his is a stricter judgment or greater **condemnation**.
5. The text doesn't say this judgment is necessarily an end-times, Judgment Seat of Christ one...but it doesn't say it isn't either!
6. Let me be very forthright: This verse puts the *Fear of God* in me. I tremble at these and similar Words:
  - *Deu 4:2 ESV* You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.
  - *Pro 30:6 ESV* Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.
  - *Mat 15:2-9 ESV* "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." (3) He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? (4) For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' (5) But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," (6) he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. (7) You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: (8) "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; (9) in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"
  - *Rev 22:18-20 ESV* I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, (19) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (20) He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

7. In *Playbook*, I defined the *Fear of the Lord*:

- *The fear of the Lord is the love, reverence, awe and passion that prompt the believer to obey God. It is that state of mental and emotional sanctification where the believer sees God as holy and a reverent trembling results. It is the necessary characteristic of Christian discipleship where total obedience to the commands of Christ is seen as a loving response to a loving God.*
- *It is a behavioral restraining element even in the heart of those who do not follow Christ. In other words, it is a cultural acknowledgment within man's conscience of the Law of God (Ro 2:15). It is a necessary component of any Godly and moral society.*
- *It is the understanding that God will one day judge the earth and all who ever lived.*

8. Based on our text and the resulting love for and fear of God, I want you to understand a few things for clarity, and encourage you to adopt a similar mindset as we "follow the pattern:"

### Clarity, Clarity, Clarity

1. First, CRCC isn't trying to **impose** anything on anyone. **We are trying to be faithful to Scripture.**
2. CRCC isn't trying to ruin everyone's **fun**. ☺ **Be we are trying to teach all of who God is, including the beauty of His holiness.**
3. CRCC isn't naïve as it relates to the **culture**; but **our doctrine must not be driven by the world.**
4. CRCC isn't trying to intentionally be **controversial**; we just know as teachers, **we will be "judged with greater strictness"** in some way or another, so we stick to Scripture! ☺
5. CRCC isn't **unloving**; but we do recognize that **holding to what the Bible clearly teaches in unpopular areas can seem that way**. We pledge to work harder at loving in tangible ways! ☺

### A Similar Mindset

1. In some environments, you either do or will "teach." Can you see application here for your own life?
2. Every idle word we speak will be judged by Christ (again, Matt 12:36). Do you understand the seriousness of your "teaching tongue?"
3. Everyone has a "standard rule for faith and practice." For us, it is God's Holy Word. What is yours?
4. Jesus said a few things about this mindset we are after:
  - *Luk 11:27-28 ESV* *As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" (28) But he said, "**Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!**" (emphasis mine)*
  - *Luk 12:47-48 ESV* *And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. (48) But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. **Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.** (emphasis mine)*

**My encouragement to you today is to realize the great responsibility we have as readers, hearers, doers, and in some context, TEACHERS of God's Word. May our Lord give you all the strength to understand that responsibility, and the awareness that one day, we will give an account.**

*Rom 14:12 ESV* *So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

*Heb 4:13-16 ESV* *And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (14) Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. (15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*