

### Reading Plan

1. Read the book of James once per week in one sitting
2. Challenge: Read the book of Proverbs, in addition to James, once per week

### Mark Your Bible / Memory Work

- [James 3:1](#)
- [James 3:5](#)
- [James 3:8](#)
- [James 3:10](#)
- [James 3:17-18](#)

### James 3:1 - Warning To Teachers

1. “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.” ([Jm. 3:1](#))
  - a. masters: an instructor (gen. or spec.):—doctor, master, teacher. (Strong 23)
    - i. Evidently there were those rushing into teaching before they were ready
    - ii. Perhaps they were looking for recognition of being a teacher (cf. [1 Tim. 1:5-7](#))
  - b. There is a time to be ready to teach ([Heb. 5:11-14](#))
  - c. To be a good teacher, preparation must take place
    - i. We must back up teaching by practice
    - ii. Remember, faith without works is dead ([Jm. 2:17](#))
  - d. Teachers will receive greater, heavier, or stricter judgment from God
    - i. Why? What is taught may mean the difference between Heaven and hell for us and the hearers (cf. [1 Tim. 4:16](#))

### James 3:2-8 - Control of the Tongue

1. “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.” ([Jm. 3:2](#))
  - a. offend: to *trip*, i.e. (fig.) to *err, sin, fail* (of salvation):—fall, offend, stumble. (Strong 62)
  - b. word: the act of speaking, speech (Thayer 380)
    - i. “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: But he that refraineth his lips *is* wise.” ([Pr. 10:19](#))
  - c. perfect: of humans *perfect, fully developed* (BDAG 996)
    - i. The mature (fully developed) individual will restrain his or her speech
    - ii. We can tell who is and is not mature by their speech
  - d. to bridle: to bridle, hold in check, restrain (Thayer 664)
  - e. “whole body” or the complete person
    - i. Our speech directly affects our entire being (cf. [Mt. 15:10-20](#))
  - f. Self-control is critical when it comes to our speech (cf. [2 Pt. 1:6](#); [Gal. 5:23](#))

## James 3

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2. “Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.” ([Jm. 3:3](#))
  - a. bits: a bridle (Thayer 664) cf. [Rev. 14:20](#); [Ps. 32:9](#), [39:1](#)
  - b. A horse is a large animal but is controlled (guided) with a small bridle
3. “Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.” ([Jm. 3:4](#))
  - a. are they turned about: steered, guided (BDAG 638)
  - b. helm: “a rudder” (akin to *pedos*, “the blade of an oar”) (Vine 539)
  - c. governor: to lead or guide straight, to keep straight, to direct, the steersman, helmsman of a ship (Thayer 258)
  - d. listeth: to will deliberately, have a purpose, be minded (Thayer 105)
  - e. A ship is a large vessel in comparison to the small rudder but it is controlled (guided) by it according to the will of the steersman
4. “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” ([Jm. 3:5](#))
  - a. tongue: the organ of speech (Thayer 118)
    - i. Rider controls the horse by the bridle
    - ii. Steersman controls the ship by the rudder
    - iii. The heart controls the body by the tongue
  - b. “little member” or small part of the body
    - i. Compared to a bridle and rudder with the horse and ship respectively
  - c. boasteth great things: to *talk big*, i.e. *be grandiloquent (arrogant, egotistic)* (Strong 46)
    - i. Look what I can do
    - ii. Pride is dangerous ([1 Tim. 3:6](#))
  - d. how great a matter: a dense growth of trees, forest (BDAG 1027)
  - e. kindleth: to ignite, to kindle, to set ablaze (Louw-Nida 177)
    - i. How many forest fires were started with just a little spark? (cf. [Pr. 26:20-21](#))
5. “And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.” ([Jm. 3:6](#))
  - a. a fire: figuratively speaking the tongue is like fire, if used incorrectly
    - i. “It is a ‘fire,’ (a) in the pain it inflicts; (b) in the destruction which attends it; (c) in the effects which follow it.” (Woods, *Commentary on James*, pg. 164)
  - b. world of iniquity: the sum of all iniquities (unrighteousness)
  - c. members: limbs, body parts
    - i. The tongue is itself a part of the body ([Jm. 3:5](#))

- d. that it defileth: to stain or spot
    - i. “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.” ([Mt. 15:11](#))
    - ii. “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.” ([Mt. 15:18](#))
  - e. whole body: the complete person
  - f. setteth on fire: to ignite, to burn up
  - g. course of nature: wheel, figuratively the round of human activity and life
    - i. A tongue unchecked affects the whole of our life and others
  - h. set on fire of hell: the final destination of the wicked
    - i. “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” ([Mt. 5:22](#))
    - ii. This fire is comparable to hell and will consign one to hell through continued practice
6. “For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:” ([Jm. 3:7](#))
- a. of beasts: wild animals
  - b. of birds: that which is able to fly, winged
  - c. of serpents: a creeping thing, reptile
  - d. of things in the sea: marine animals
  - e. tamed: to subdue, restrain, curb
  - f. mankind: human nature
    - i. “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” ([Gen. 1:28](#))
7. “But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” ([Jm. 3:8](#))
- a. man: mankind, humans
  - b. unruly: cannot be restrained
  - c. evil: that which is injurious, base, morally wrong, or bad in character
  - d. full of deadly poison: filled to the full with death bringing substance
    - i. Idea is that of the venomous viper whose poison is under their lips
    - ii. “34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil

- treasure bringeth forth evil things. 36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” ([Mt. 12:34-37](#))
- iii. “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; Adders’ poison is under their lips. Selah.” ([Ps. 140:3](#) - speaking of the evil man)
  - e. There is always a potential that we will use our tongue for evil
    - i. Could go many years without sinning with the tongue and in a moment of passion lash out
    - ii. If we control the heart (and what goes into the heart), we control the tongue

### **James 3:9-12 - Contradiction of the Tongue**

1. “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.” ([Jm. 3:9](#))
  - a. bless we: to speak well of, idea is a eulogy
  - b. God, even the Father: God the Father
  - c. curse we: to doom, invoke evil on
    - i. Praying up to God to call down evil upon another
    - ii. The motive is evil in this case
  - d. men: mankind, humans
  - e. made after the similitude of God: made in His image
    - i. “26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” ([Gen. 1:26-27](#))
2. “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” ([Jm. 3:10](#))
  - a. The same source, the tongue, produces two different and opposite results: blessing and cursing
  - b. My brethren, these things ought not so to be: the tongue should not be used this way
    - i. The best way to avoid the misuse of the tongue is not to start
    - ii. If started, stop immediately
3. “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?” ([Jm. 3:11](#))
  - a. fountain: spring naturally occurring
  - b. sweet: fresh
  - c. bitter: disagreeable to the senses; think salt water (cf. [Jm. 3:12](#))
  - d. This rhetorical question demands a “no” answer

4. “Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.” ([Jm. 3:12](#))
  - a. The answer is an emphatic “no!” to these rhetorical questions
  - b. A fig tree produces figs
  - c. A vine produces grapes (or some other fruit of a vine plant)
  - d. A fountain can either produce fresh water or salt water from the same location but not both
  - e. Our tongue should only produce those things that are good
    - i. “Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.” ([Mt. 12:33](#))

### **James 3:13 - Wisdom and Knowledge**

1. “Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” ([Jm. 3:13](#))
  - a. James continues on with the theme of teachers in this section
    - i. The perception is a wise man, endued with knowledge (intelligent, experienced, expert) is a teacher
    - ii. Wisdom comes from God ([Pr. 2:6](#); [Jm. 1:5](#))
    - iii. Wisdom is to be desired ([Pr. 4:7](#))
    - iv. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom ([Pr. 9:10](#))
  - b. James identifies who is truly wise and endued with knowledge
    - i. It is the one that shows it in right conduct
  - c. let him shew: make known or demonstrate
    - i. It will not be hidden nor should it be
    - ii. Practice what we teach
  - d. good conversation: a morally excellent manner of life, behavior, or conduct
  - e. works: same word used in [Jm. 2:14](#), [17-22](#), [24-26](#)
    - i. Deeds done in obedience to God’s will
  - f. meekness: an inward grace that is focused upon doing the will of God and remaining balanced in life; rejects selfishness
    - i. Jesus is the ultimate example of meekness ([Mt. 11:29](#))
  - g. wisdom: knowledge applied, specifically in this case it is godly wisdom
    - i. James is getting ready to contrast two types of wisdom: wisdom from below and wisdom from above
  - h. When we allow God’s Word to rule in our hearts, it will be shown in our behavior
    - i. As teachers of God’s Word, we must show the world we believe it by doing it
    - ii. Our lives may be the only Bible people will read
    - iii. What does the Bible of my life say?

### **James 3:14-16 - Wisdom From Below**

1. “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.” ([Jm. 3:14](#))
  - a. bitter: used in a natural sense in [Jm. 3:11](#) to describe the waters of a fountain; here it is used figuratively of something cruel or harsh
  - b. envying: resentment or being pained at the success of others; envy is often paired with strife
    - i. “...not in strife and envying.” ([Rm. 13:13](#))
    - ii. “...among you envying, and strife...” ([1 Cor. 3:3](#))
    - iii. “...envyings, wraths, strifes...” ([2 Cor. 12:20](#))
    - iv. Envy is the rottenness of the bones ([Pr. 14:30](#))
  - c. strife: a desire to put one’s self forward, a factious spirit
    - i. Opposite of meekness
    - ii. Only causes problems with the church as we are to be united ([Eph. 4:3](#))
    - iii. A teacher who seeks his or her own prestige will be prone to this behavior
  - d. glory not: do not boast over your professed knowledge and superiority over others
    - i. This person would not be opposed to pushing another downward so that he or she may go upward
    - ii. The goal is to build everyone up ([1 Cor. 14:26b](#); [Eph. 4:15-16](#))
  - e. Such behavior speaks falsely against the truth
    - i. We are to be for the truth not against it ([2 Cor. 13:7-8](#))
    - ii. How can a teacher who is full of envy and causes strife ever teach against these things much less prove the truth in their behavior?
    - iii. The teacher that would behave this way does not believe the truth and as such their efforts as a teacher are without value
  - f. James will show next that this wisdom is not from God
2. “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.” ([Jm. 3:15](#))
  - a. This wisdom descendeth not from above: envy, strife, boasting, and lying against the truth does not come from God
    - i. Remember [Jm. 1:17](#)
    - ii. Where does this wisdom that “descendeth not from above” come from then?
  - b. earthly: things belonging to this temporary earth i.e., the wisdom of man versus the wisdom of God
    - i. Contrasted with heavenly things ([Jn. 3:12](#))
    - ii. Preoccupied with wordly things ([Phil. 3:19](#))
  - c. sensual: governed by the appetite and passion of physical things
    - i. Contrasted with having the Spirit ([Jude 19](#))

- d. devilish: resembling or proceeding from an evil spirit, demon-like
    - i. We want nothing to do with this
  - e. Notice the progressive order of this behavior of sinful activity
    - i. Earthly → Sensual → Devilish
    - ii. “First worldly in disposition, he then easily yields to the desires of his lower nature, and finally partakes of the character of the evil in which he finds his greatest pleasure.” (Woods, *Commentary on James*, pg. 188)
  - f. What is the product of envying and strife?
3. “For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.” ([Jm. 3:16](#))
- a. Same words used here for “envying” and “strife” as found in [Jm. 3:14](#)
  - b. confusion: a state of disorder, instability
    - i. God is not of confusion ([1 Cor. 14:33](#))
  - c. every evil work: all corrupt, bad, and wicked deeds come forth from envy and strife
    - i. Envy delivered Jesus to be crucified ([Mk. 15:6-15](#))
  - d. If we have envy or strife in our hearts we need to get it out immediately and seek the wisdom that is from above

### **James 3:17-18 - Wisdom From Above**

1. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” ([Jm. 3:17](#))
- a. But the wisdom that is from above: this is the wisdom which proceeds from God
  - b. pure: idea is that which is free from every fault, immaculate
    - i. Target is Christ ([1 Jn. 3:3](#))
    - ii. We must think about things that are pure ([Phil. 4:8](#))
    - iii. “Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” ([Mt. 5:8](#))
  - c. peaceable: loving or seeking harmony especially with God
  - d. gentle: equitable or fair
    - i. Requirement of every Christian ([Titus 3:2](#))
  - e. easy to be intreated: ready to obey, willing to yield to that which is right
    - i. This person is a good listener and willing to hear what others have to say
    - ii. This person will not stick to a course of error if convinced of the truth
    - iii. When he realizes his course is erroneous he will abandon it and adopt the right way
    - iv. We are always be open to the truth ([Jm. 1:19](#))
  - f. full: to be filled
  - g. mercy: pity or compassion

## James 3

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- i. Mercy must be practiced if we wish to have mercy practiced toward us by God ([Jm. 2:13](#))
- h. good fruits: acceptable produce of righteousness to God
  - i. Fruit of the Spirit ([Gal. 5:22-23](#))
- i. without partiality: not to be parted
  - i. Goes back to [Jm. 2:1-4](#)
- j. without hypocrisy: unfeigned, undisguised, genuine
  - i. Timothy had this type of faith as did his mother and grandmother ([2 Tim. 1:5](#))
- k. We must produce the fruit of righteousness
- 2. “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” ([Jm. 3:18](#))
  - a. fruit of righteousness: the produce of integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, and being right with God
  - b. is sown: the idea of spreading seed to produce fruit
  - c. peace: harmony with God and with those which have the mind of Christ
  - d. of them that make peace: another way of saying peacemakers
    - i. “Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” ([Mt. 5:9](#))
    - ii. When we teach the gospel we are spreading peace ([Eph. 6:15](#); [Rm. 10:15](#); [Acts 10:36](#))
    - iii. The seed is the Word of God ([Lk. 8:11](#))
  - e. Every Christian should be sowing the seed of the gospel of peace thus making the world a more peaceful place
  - f. Furthermore, every Christian should be living the gospel thus making the world a better place