

CHRISTIAN WORKER

“We are workers together with Him...” (2 Corinthians 6:1)

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A WEIGHTY RESPONSIBILITY

(JAS. 3:1)

John Haffner

In the Lord’s church, the teaching of God’s Word is paramount. It is by sound instruction that faith is born, nurtured, and sustained. The apostle Paul declared, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Preaching and teaching are, therefore, essential to the spiritual health of the church. Yet, while this is a noble and necessary work, it is also very much a work not to be entered into lightly. At the start of a section of scripture detailing the dangers associated with the use of the tongue, James issued a solemn warning: “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (Jas. 3:1). Teaching, in all its many forms, is a weighty responsibility. Let us briefly consider what Scripture reveals concerning the role of the teacher and some of the many concepts connected with this area of study.

Relationship – The Influence of Teachers

James addressed his readers as “brethren,” emphasizing the familial nature of the church. Yet even within the family of God, not all roles are the same. While there is a sense in which all Christians are called to proclaim the truth (1 Pet. 2:9), there is a unique level of authority and influence granted to those who become teachers.

A teacher has the power to shape minds and direct hearts. Whether standing before a class, speaking from the pulpit, or mentoring someone one-on-one, a teacher becomes a spiritual guide. As such, they will either lead souls toward truth and salvation or into error and ruin. Paul warned Timothy to “pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching,” noting how adherence to Christ’s doctrine would save his listeners as well as himself (1 Tim. 4:16, NASB). By contrast, Jesus warned of the Pharisees who, though claiming to be spiritually upright

teachers, were “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14). The one who teaches must be keenly aware of how closely their words may be followed by their listeners.

Risk – The Potential to Mislead

James also cautioned, “we shall receive a stricter judgment.” He includes himself among the teachers, acknowledging both the necessity of the work and the increased accountability that accompanies it. To presume to speak on God’s behalf is not a light thing; it is to place oneself under not only the scrutiny of

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THE POSITIVE POWER OF THE TONGUE (JAS. 3:2-5A)

Cody Westbrook

In Exodus 4:11 the Lord asked Moses, “Who has made man’s mouth?” and in Romans 6:13 Paul commanded “present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” The Lord intricately designed our bodies (Ps. 139:13-16) to be used for His glory, and that includes our mouths. But, sadly, we often underestimate the good that can be accomplished for God with them.

If you were to ask any Bible student to name the chapter in God’s Word that deals with the tongue, surely James 3 would be the answer. The chapter begins with a warning to those who would seek to be teachers of God’s Word (3:1). “We will receive a stricter judgment,” James says, and so we should take extra care with our words - the vehicle for teaching. James 3:2-5a provides an exposition of the power of our tongue to accomplish good. They may be small - like a bit or a rudder - but they wield great power! Consider some passages and points from God’s Word about the good that can be accomplished with our tongue.

- Our tongue can praise God. David said, “My tongue shall speak of Your righteousness, and of Your praise all the day long” (Ps. 35:28). Another Psalmist said, “I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue” (Psalm. 66:17). God is worthy of our praise because He is our God and our Creator (Ps. 139:14). God is worthy of our praise at all times, even when things are difficult (Ps. 34:1). Remember the exhortation of Hebrews 13:15: “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”
- Our tongues can bless the lives of others. Solomon said, “The tongue of the righteous is choice silver... the lips of the righteous feed man” (Pro. 10:20-21). How often do we stop to consider the amount of good that can be done in the life of another simply by our words? A kind word, a message of encouragement, a drop of wisdom, and even a well-timed rebuke can be positive. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Pro. 25:11). A good word is like life (Pro. 15:4) which brings joy (Pro. 15:23a). How good it is to bless others with our

words (Pro. 15:23b)!

- Our tongues can edify the church. Consider Ephesians 4:29-31 in light of our speech. Paul commands, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification...” Are your words helping or hurting the church? Is the church stronger due to the things that you say? The next passage is a word of motivation—“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...” The Holy Spirit desires the unity of the church (Eph. 2:14-18) and if our words destroy that unity, it grieves Him. Verses 31-32 provide some practical instruction. Instead of using our tongues in anger, we ought to use them in kindness being willing to show compassion and forgiveness to one another.

The Bible has so much more to say about how we can use our tongue for good. Our speech can exhibit gentleness, graciousness, and tactfulness (Col. 4:6). We can use our tongue to proclaim the Word of God (Mal. 2:7). Our speech can be truthful and sincere (Zech. 8:16) as well as wise (Ps. 37:30). But none of this is possible without first making a decision to harness the positive power of the tongue.

Words begin as thoughts (Mark 7:20-23) and thus the heart must be right if the words will be right. We must say “I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress” (Ps. 17:3). Like Job, our determination should be “As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit” (Job 27:3-4). It is not easy to control the tongue. James 3 emphasizes that well. It is a life long pursuit that requires much time in study and prayer, and there will be times of failure. Likely, many! But with the help of God we can do it.

Psalm 45:1 says, “My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” Indeed, that is true for us all. Too often we write stories of sin and shame, using our tongues as weapons of mass destruction. It doesn’t have to be that way, and it shouldn’t. Let us purpose in our hearts to harness and employ the positive power of the tongue.

CW

THE NEGATIVE POWER OF THE TONGUE (JAS. 3:5-8)

Allen Webster

A loose tongue is a loaded weapon. Wars have been declared by words. Friendships have ended over a sentence. Marriages have collapsed over repeated verbal wounds. Churches have split because of loose lips. Solomon warned, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Pro. 18:21). James echoes that theme (Jas. 3:5-8). The little tongue can be overwhelmingly destructive.

The Tongue Has the Power to Destroy Like Fire (James 3:5-6). James compares the tongue to a spark that sets an entire forest ablaze. A word, like a match, can burn down years of trust, decades of peace, or generations of unity. A single reckless sentence can ignite family turmoil. A gossip-filled phone call can destroy reputations. A sarcastic insult can ruin a child’s confidence. A bitter accusation can divide an eldership. One unguarded moment, and the damage is done. The tongue is a whole world of evil (3:6) packed into a three-inch muscle. It can lie, curse, mock, slander, exaggerate, flatter, and seduce—all in one conversation.

The tongue “defiles the whole body.” As a dead fly ruins perfume (Ecc. 10:1), a toxic tongue can contaminate a life. The man known for being honest can lose his influence with one cruel joke. The woman who teaches children can undo her good by sowing discord among sisters.

The tongue “sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire by hell.” Satan loves an uncontrolled tongue. Jesus told Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan!” (Matt. 16:23). Why? Because Peter spoke against the cross. When our tongues deceive, destroy, or divide, they are kindled by hell’s fire.

Flames can spread fast. Firefighters say dry brush, low humidity, and high wind create the perfect conditions for wildfires. In spiritual terms, pride, bitterness, and a lack of self-control create the perfect environment for a destructive tongue. Smokey Bear warned, “Only you can prevent forest fires.” James is saying, “Only you can prevent relationship fires.”

The Tongue Has the Power to Defy Control (James 3:7-8). Men have tamed lions, elephants, dolphins, and hawks. We put bits in horses’ mouths (3:3) and rudders on ships (3:4). But we cannot put a leash on our mouths. The tongue is the wildest animal in the zoo.

A man can manage a company with hundreds of employees but cannot manage his mouth at the dinner table. A woman can train a dog to roll over but will not train herself to hold

her tongue when angry. A preacher can exegete Hebrew verbs but spew sarcasm at his wife. A Bible class teacher can outline Paul’s epistles but spread gossip during lunch.

No man alone can tame the tongue, but with God’s help, it can be restrained. “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). David prayed, “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Ps. 141:3).

The key is not to try to fix the tongue, but to fix the heart—for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34). A clean fountain does not send out bitter water (Jas. 3:11). If we want better words, we must seek better hearts.

The Tongue Has the Power to Deliver Poison (James 3:8). The tongue is like a pigmy rattler—small but venomous. A snake bite may not look dangerous at first, but poison spreads quickly through the blood. Words work the same way. A slanderous comment might last five seconds, but it can fester for five years. A critical remark can poison a marriage, friendship, or congregation.

Wicked tongues as “sharp swords” and “arrows” (Ps. 57:4; 64:3). The poison of asps is under some lips (Rom. 3:13). Words are weapons when:

- A bitter spouse poisons her children against their father.
- A malicious rumor drives a young woman from the church.
- A racial slur wounds a soul.
- A proud boast alienates brethren.
- A hateful online post creates division.

Poison kills silently and slowly. So do evil words.

This passage teaches that we cannot take the tongue lightly. Under Christ’s control our speech reflects heaven, not hell. The tongue was not made to destroy, but to praise God (3:9). It was not designed to poison, but to heal. It was not meant to curse, but to bless.

How can we begin to transform our tongues?

1. **Ask God to guard your mouth daily** (Ps. 141:3).
2. **Think before speaking. “Be swift to hear, slow to speak”** (Jas. 1:19).
3. **Speak with grace “seasoned with salt”** (Col. 4:6).
4. **Repent. If you have hurt someone with words, confess it, and make it right** (Jas. 5:16).
5. **Feed on the Word. The more Scripture in the heart, the better the words from the mouth** (Ps. 119:11).

The tongue is small but mighty. In Satan’s hands, it is a flame, a wild beast, and a venomous snake. But in God’s hands, it becomes a tool of peace, praise, and truth. “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).



BE CONSISTENT! (JAS. 3:9-12)

Carl McCann

“The tongue is in the middle of everything whether good or bad.” (Robert R. Taylor)

James chapter 3 is entirely devoted to the power of the tongue. The ability we have to communicate in words can be a tremendous blessing or a horrific curse to the hearers (Pro. 18:21). The assigned context highlights how unnatural it is for professed believers in God to have a language that does not mesh with what they claim to believe. Seven times Jesus identifies the religious leaders as hypocrites in Matthew 23. Should I or we be concerned today with the same label or have we convinced ourselves that our speech can be inconsistent with our claims and not affect our relationship with God (cf. Jas. 1:22)?

In verse nine James identifies the noblest use of the tongue – “blessing God.” Every Sunday we have the tremendous opportunity to worship God (John 4:24). Three of the five actions of worship (singing, praying and preaching) involve the tongue. Without doubt we should all desire to follow the Psalmist, “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be continually be in my mouth.” It is the height of inconsistency to move from praising God to cursing someone made in His

image (Gen. 1:26). Many things may be blamed or used to justify the inconsistency, but the reality is, the violators’ heart is not right. Various avenues are taken when cursing our fellow humans. Consider this brief list: slander (1 Pet. 2:1), gossip (NASB) (2 Cor. 12:20), lying (Eph. 4:25), and deception (Rom. 3:13). Sadly, more could be listed. How sobering is Jesus’ statement in Matthew 12:34, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” If the improper words spoken were not stored in the heart (mind), they would never have been spoken (Ps. 141: 3-4a). Before leaving this point, please dwell upon the following, “If someone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20)?

In verse 10 James continues addressing what ought not to be – “blessing and cursing”. On this verse brother J.J. Turner noted, a clearer translation is “These things are not right, my brothers, and should not be.” How great a tragedy occurs when the same mouth is used to salute and slander, praise and punishes, and glorifies and gouge. How seriously should we consider Proverbs 4:23? “Keep your heart with all diligence’ For out of it spring the issues of life.” It should be the goal of every Christian to do the right thing always (Tit. 2:11-14). Habitual, persistent sin is to be avoided.

At this point let’s refresh and refocus ourselves from James 3. “For we all stumble in many things” (Jas. 3:2). “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (Jas. 3:8). Consistency is one of the great challenges of the tongue and in this area we can relate to the apostle Peter (Matt. 26:31-46) for our “spirit is indeed willing but our flesh is weak.” When we fail to control our tongue, we are doing that which is not right. Our faith is tested by the consistency of our speech. May our speech “always be with grace, seasoned with salt...” (Col. 4:6).

Verses 11 and 12 highlight the consistency of nature – “from the same.” James provides three examples from nature to further his point. First, he gives the illustration from water. Does a spring give both fresh and bitter water from the same opening? Answer, NO. James’ point is simple – the product is always consistent with its source. The application is obvious, what I say and the how I say it reveals the true source! If people really want to know what someone is like all that is needed is to spend time with them, their speech will eventually reveal their true identity (cf. 1 Cor. 2:11). Second, we are to consider two examples from agriculture. What do we naturally expect a fig tree to produce; or how about a grapevine? The answer is obvious. God set forth an undeniable fact in Genesis 1 that everything would produce after “its kind” (cf. Gen. 1:11) and for it to happen otherwise, “is not right.” James, cements his point by once again referring to water, can fresh and salt water

come from the same spring? The answer is still a resounding NO!

In conclusion, I pray that we may all apply these truths to our lives. May we put into practice what James commands by hearing, doing, looking and living the truth of God's word (cf. Jas. 1:22-26). I heard someone say, "Whatever comes up in the bucket is down in the well." May God help us to truly consider the words we speak and the tone in which they are spoken. Shakespeare is credited with the following statement, "Consistency thou art a jewel" and with it we can all agree, especially as it applies to our speech.

CW

HOW DID JESUS USE HIS WORDS?

Anthony Scherffius

In this study through the book of James, we have seen much concerning the tongue and the responsibility of being a teacher. James records for us the severity of teaching, and how those who take on this weighty responsibility will receive a stricter judgment. James further discusses the positive and negative power of the tongue, and how the Christian must be consistent with this great member of the body. James paints a beautiful word picture for us concerning this very powerful instrument given to us by God. But how are we to use it? How did God intend for us to use our tongue? In 1 Peter 2:21, the apostle writes "*For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps...*". In order to answer the question "how do we use our tongue?" we must go to the Master Teacher, observing His example. How did Jesus use His words?

1. He Used His Words Tactfully—While on earth, Jesus did and said many things. However, one thing Jesus did not do was use His words impulsively. The Messiah knew exactly how to use His words in such a way that would inform the ignorant, silence the fool, instruct the wise, and teach the student all at the exact same time, while also glorifying His Heavenly Father in the process. Matthew records for us a day Jesus taught, rebuked, silenced, and revealed all at once, and He did it tactfully. In Matthew 12, Jesus was approached repeatedly by the Pharisees. They desired to trick Him by making accusations, questioning His authority, and even associating His power with demonic spirits. Jesus responds to every single attack with skill and sensitivity while dealing with others, and with difficult issues. Jesus understood the power of the tongue and used

it tactfully.

- 2. He Used His Words Sparingly**—When we think of Jesus as the Master Teacher, we typically go to passages showing Him to be patient, understanding, and teaching in such a way that people from all walks of life could understand and relate. One thing we do not bring out in Jesus showing His wisdom in teaching is when He chose not to speak. The physician Luke records a moment in Jesus' life when He kept silent, ignoring one who had a desire to hear Jesus. In Luke 23:8-11, it says "Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him..." However it says, "... but He answered him not a word." Why would the loving and caring Jesus ignore someone who had a desire to hear from Him? It was because Jesus understood the ancient proverb "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will also be like him" (Pro. 26:4). Herod had no desire to hear the truth. He wanted Jesus to perform a show of entertainment. Jesus did not use His words to entertain kings like a jester, He used them to glorify God.
- 3. He Used His Words Scripturally**—After Jesus was baptized, fulfilling all righteousness, he was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the adversary. While being tempted, Jesus only responded in one way—"It is written." (Matt. 4:4-10). If you look at these passages, you will also see how Satan uses the same phrase, but there is a difference. Jesus spoke scripturally while Satan only spoke with scripture. Just because one uses scripture, it does not mean they are teaching the truth. James warns us by saying not many of us need to be teachers for a lack of self-control (Jas. 3:1ff). There are some, like Satan, who will twist God's Word for selfish ambition. Jesus on the other hand used His words scripturally, approved of by God. He allowed God's Word to speak for itself (Matt. 21:42).
- 4. He Used His Words Plainly**—Something else Jesus did with His words was He used them in a way that others could understand Him. He spoke in parables (Mark 4:10-12), and taught in such a way that everyone from all walks of life could hear the truth. He talked to those who were rejected (John 4:7-42), He talked to the rich and wealthy (John 5:1-15), He talked to rulers and leaders (Mark 5:21-43), He talked to tax collectors (Luke 29:1-10), He talked to adulterers (John 8:1-11), He talked to Jews (Luke 6:6-11), and He talked to Gentiles (Matt. 8:5-13). He used his words in such a way so that He could relate to all kinds of backgrounds and tell all of them the same truth so that everyone one of them could understand.
- 5. He Used His Words Authoritatively**—One of the most famous ways Jesus used His words was with authority. This was actually one of the reasons Jesus stood out as a teacher.

It says the crowd was amazed at His teaching because he was one having authority unlike the scribes (Matt. 7:28-29; Mark 1:22). Jesus was able to speak with authority for a number of reasons, one of them being because He was using the Words that had all authority, God's Word. Jesus was not timid when it came to proclaiming the Kingdom of God and His Message. He spoke boldly, courageously, and authoritatively.

By looking at all of these examples of how Jesus used His words, as well as looking at the exhortation from James in his epistle, how should we apply this? Understanding our words have meaning, power, impact, and consequences, we must respect the powerful weapon God has given to us, using it to glorify Him. The way we do that is by knowing the power behind the tongue, using it with skill and sensitivity, not being rash but knowing when to speak and when to be silent. We must only speak where the Bible speaks and stay silent where the Bible is silent. We must speak in such a way that all can understand the truth plainly and know that we speak by the authority of God. So next time a word is about to pass through your lips, ask this question, "Would Jesus say this?"

CW

GOSPEL PARALLELS: FAITH AND WORKS

Dave Rogers

When Noah built the ark, he was in the minority but he was right—and it rained! When sold into slavery by his brothers Joseph was definitely "in the minority," yet God blessed him for doing what was right! Though ridiculed by others, David slew Goliath because he acted according to God's will.

Christians are the minority: God calls us to preach like righteous Noah, so that lost ones may hear and heed His warning! We must teach so that even if the whole world is lost, we will be saved because God is faithful to those who are faithful to HIM! We can live confidently and faithfully amid a disobedient culture because of our trust in the living God (1 Tim. 4:10 - our hope is set on Him).

Most of Christendom ignores or denies the relationship between faith and works in the bible. Sincere people insist that John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8 express the sum of God's "plan" for salvation, declaring that salvation is "by faith from first to last," but what they generally mean is "salvation by faith apart from everything else," with mankind having NO part in salvation. The Holy Spirit, however, "tied" faith to works (in James 2).

When the Bible speaks of "faith" and "works," the context and meaning of these words matter. The words we use sometimes have more than one meaning, and words inspired writers used are often the same. To understand the Holy Spirit's words, we must take into account their context and use (e.g., throwing a "fit" is not the same as getting "fit").

"Faith" and "works" are each used in at least two ways in the New Testament. "Faith" may refer to one's personal measure of belief, while "the" faith speaks of the entire system of salvation God provides through Christ (cf. Acts 6:7, where "a great many of the priests were obedient to THE faith"). "Works" can describe actions intended to bring one into another's debt ("meritorious" works) or it may refer to actions that spring from grateful hearts as expressions of love and appreciation (so-called "works of faith"). Examine what the New Testament says about faith and works and it becomes clear that God did not segregate these great concepts but joined them in Christ!

James chapter 2 shows that faith and works are actually "gospel parallels," qualities that complement each other. Faith and works are words that must be defined by their New Testament use, not by current religious dogmas.

Ephesians 2:8 does say plainly that we are saved by grace through faith, and "faith" means "belief; conviction of the truth of something." In this context "faith" is conviction that the gospel is the true message of God, and that Jesus His Son died for our sins (and arose again).

"Works" likewise has more than one meaning in the scriptures. Titus 3:5 refers to "works" that would cause a person to be considered "righteous" (a felon who serves out his sentence could be considered "righteous" because he has "paid his debt"). In this context, one who earns a paycheck "deserves" that income because he has exchanged \$X worth of work for it—it is owed to him. Some of the ancient Hebrews believed God "owed" them blessings (despite their unfaithfulness).

The New Testament also records works "of faith" however, as in James 2:18; "But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." These actions—like the obedience of Noah, Joseph, and David—are the "fruit" of faith. They embody no aura of "indebtedness" (by God), but a sense of gratitude! In 2 Corinthians 4:13 Paul "spoke" because he "believed," his words serving as the embodiment of his faith. First Peter 3:21 offers a good illustration of this concept, wherein baptism is "...the answer of a good conscience toward God..."

James 2:10-12 shows that "works" done by Christians as acts of submission to Moses' law would actually be contradictory to faith in Jesus. (The motive here seems to have been for Christians to "increase" their righteousness by doing these things, or to "substitute" them for faith due to societal pressure).

Paul addressed the same problem in Galatians 5:4, where some of the Christians were trying to “earn” righteousness, thus abandoning faith in the process.

We also see an image of faith that clashes with works James 2:15-16—“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?” The Holy Spirit calls this “dead” faith in vs. 17, yet this is exactly the definition of “faith” for much of modern Christendom.

James’ inspired summary (Jas. 2:19-26) illustrates the difference between an earthly concept of “faith” and Heaven’s definition of it by contrasting the examples of demons and Abraham. Abraham was justified by faith (vs. 23) that expressed itself in active submission to God’s instruction (“works,” vs. 21). Unlike those who demand that God credit their intentions, Abraham’s faith was “completed”—fulfilled—by his works, vs. 22. Surely it is no accident that the only time God’s word joins “faith” with “only” is when it declares that “faith ONLY” cannot save (vs. 24)!

CW

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human judgment, but also divine. Paul wrote that those who pervert the gospel are “accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9). Jesus warned that anyone who “causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin” would be better off drowned in the sea with a millstone around his neck (Matt. 18:6). The use of such vivid imagery underlines the spiritual danger posed by careless or corrupt teaching.

What’s more, teaching is not only about doctrinal correctness; it is also about character. Hypocrisy in a teacher can undermine the truth as surely as false doctrine. One of the reasons Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees was because “they say, and do not do” (Matt. 23:3). Those who teach must practice what they preach, or else risk becoming a stumbling block to others (Rom. 2:21-24).

Reverence – The Need for Preparation

James’ meaning is not that the faithful shouldn’t teach, rather he issues a warning against presumptuousness. Let a teacher’s attitude be one of caution and reverence rather than overconfidence. The immature cannot well promote the development of saints in the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13). Ezra serves as a powerful example. He taught Israel only after he had first “prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it” (Ezra 7:10). In the same fashion,

a teacher today must not rush into the role hastily.

Since teaching is such a serious responsibility, it must be approached with prayer, study, and humility. Teaching well requires much more than just knowing Scripture, it requires us to handle it in a responsible and accurate way. The teacher must “be diligent to present [himself] approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Sound teaching may not always meet with man’s approval, but it is not man’s approval that we are after.

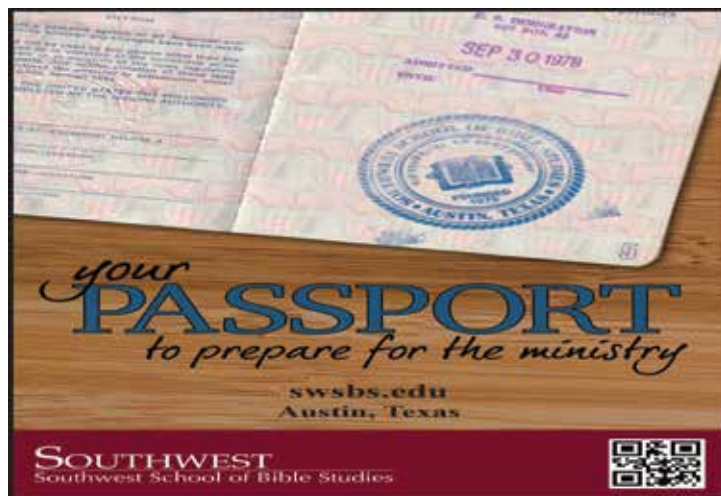
Reason – The Motivation to Teach

Teaching is not about showing off knowledge or intellect. It is not about wielding authority over others. It is about humbly guiding souls and building them up in the truth. Peter instructed elders to shepherd the flock “not for dishonest gain, but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:2-3). Paul described his ministry as one driven by “the love of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:14). The Lord taught “many things” because of His compassion for the multitudes who lacked good guidance (Mark 6:34). A faithful teacher is driven not by pride, but always by love—love for God, love for the truth, and a love for souls. This same spirit should govern all who teach, in both informal and formal settings.

Closing

James 3:1 stands as a sobering reminder to all who would teach in the Lord’s church. It is a necessary role, but one that must be approached with reverence, caution, and prayerful dependence on God. Yet, for those who undertake it faithfully, the reward is great. Paul told the Thessalonians that they were his “joy and crown” in the presence of the Lord (1 Thess. 2:19-20). Let us, therefore, give thanks for the faithful men and women who teach God’s Word with conviction and care. And as we are among them, let us remember the sacred trust we carry.

CW





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From the Director's desk

Big Change Coming!

Southwest Servant's Academy has been a mainstay for the School's summer schedule each June since Rick Brumback directed the school. This week-long academy exposes high school students to the rigors of studying at SWSBS. However, the June schedule has become too crowded with Camp Hensel and the School's graduation.

So this year, Southwest Servant's Academy is going through some changes:

Date: August 7-10 instead of the end of June.

Timeframe: Thursday night - Sunday morning instead of a full week.

Ages: 14-19 year olds (those who are entering 9th grade through those who have finished 12th grade)

While we have made some big changes to help fit Servant's Academy into our school and congregation schedule, some aspects remained unchanged. You can still expect sound Bible teaching from SWSBS faculty and alumni. Students will learn and grow, being challenged and taught. Those who attend the Academy will still enjoy world-famous hospitality from Southwest members. Even though the focus of the weekend will be on Bible study and the practice of preaching and teaching, we will have plenty of food, fun, and fellowship. We will have a catered lunch on Sunday, August 10, following morning worship with the Southwest church of Christ to end the weekend.

This year's theme is "...Things Written Afore Time..." We will study the Old Testament in its periods, people, and practical applications for today. We hope you or your student can join us!

Registration is available online at www.swsbs.edu/s2a



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