

m MASTERCLASS | JAMES

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 11

READ

JAMES 3:1-2

FOCUS

¹NOT MANY OF YOU SHOULD BECOME TEACHERS, MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, BECAUSE YOU KNOW THAT WE WHO TEACH WILL BE JUDGED MORE STRICTLY. ²WE ALL STUMBLE IN MANY WAYS. ANYONE WHO IS NEVER AT FAULT IN WHAT THEY SAY IS PERFECT, ABLE TO KEEP THEIR WHOLE BODY IN CHECK.

REFLECTION from PASTOR MATT CIANFRANI

We have all been there: you are walking along, your shoe catches on some uneven part of the sidewalk, and you stumble. Your first thought, almost subconsciously is, "I wonder who saw that?" So, you put a little skip in your step and try to pretend that you did it on purpose. Everyone stumbles--and stumbling is embarrassing--but, not all stumbles are just little moments of embarrassment. Some are moral or character stumbles and the consequences are much worse. Some consequences are even greater because they come from God Himself. James, in our passage for today, starts with a warning about "teachers" being judged more strictly when they teach God's word incorrectly because it will cause other people to stumble.

James is clear: teaching scripture is a different type of teaching and therefore has a different type of accountability. This should cause anyone who desires to teach God's Word to do so with the understanding that every idle word will be brought into judgment (Matt 12:36-37). James warns teachers of their responsibility because today, just as in his day, there can be a certain level of prestige in teaching. People may look up to you for the simple reason that you may know more about Scripture than those who sit under your teaching. This perceived prestige has the capacity to draw people to teaching for all the wrong reasons like its glory, recognition, and status.

James' point is clear, people should not undertake the responsibilities of teaching God's word if God has not called them to do it, because they will be judged more strictly. For those who have been privileged to teach, we will be held to a higher standard of accountability because our words have the capacity to affect how people view and relate to God--and that is a serious responsibility that we should not take lightly.

Thankfully God knows we are not perfect, and James acknowledges that neither he nor his teaching is perfect either. God does not expect perfection; He expects that we faithfully and diligently seek Him, His Spirit, and truth. Then if we get the opportunity to teach, we have removed all barriers (our knowledge, our ego, our devotion to other things) so that we can effectively communicate the Good News to a dying world.