

James 3:1-5

1-2. My brethren, **let not many of you become TEACHERS, knowing that we shall receive a STRICTER JUDGMENT.** For we all stumble in many things. **If anyone does not stumble in WORD,** he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

- **Ephesians 4:11-13** "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some _____ and _____, for the equipping of the _____ for the work of ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the _____ of _____, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (mature) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;"
- **Romans 12:6-8** "Having then _____ differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if _____, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry (serving), let us use it in our _____; he who _____, in _____; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality (generosity); he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

Definition: "TEACHERS, knowing that we shall receive a STRICTER JUDGMENT" - One who is teaching God's people **MUST teach in the power of the Holy Spirit and be gifted by God to teach**, otherwise, if one is teaching in their own fleshly strength and intelligence, **it can lead to PRIDE.** Why would the judgment be stricter or harsher for teachers? Because a teacher has responsibility over a flock of God's sheep, and **a teacher has the potential for HURTING the sheep if he or she is teaching something that is NOT RIGHT according to God's word.** We find many cults and dangerous groups that have started with a teacher who gains a following of students, and once the teacher goes off the deep end doctrinally, **the rest of the followers are sucked into the quicksand of FALSE DOCTRINE (teaching) and SIN.**

- **Revelation 2:23** ".....And all the _____ shall know that I (Jesus) am He who searches the minds and _____. And I will give (in judgment) to each one of you _____ to your _____."
- **II Peter 2:1-9** "But there were also _____ prophets among the people, even as there will be _____ among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies (false teachings), even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift _____. And _____ will _____ their destructive ways, because of whom the Way of Truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive _____; for a long time their _____ has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for _____; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah..... then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the _____ under _____ for the day of _____."
- **Revelation 2:20** "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you _____ that _____, Jezebel, who _____ herself a _____, to _____ and beguile (trick, lead astray) My _____ to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols."

WARNING! - Sign of the End Times - False Teachers and "Itching Ears"

False prophets and false teachers are EVERYWHERE!! Too many Christians these days are running to and fro with **itching ears**, wanting to hear a teaching or prophecy from someone, rather than study the word of God themselves to find the answer to their problems. This is one of the **signs that WE ARE IN THE LAST DAYS, or END TIMES, before Jesus returns**. Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Paul warned Timothy that it was already happening, and that **it would get worse as we get closer and closer to the Second Coming of Jesus**.

- **II Timothy 4:2-4** "Preach the _____! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and _____. For the time will come when they will _____ endure sound _____, but according to their own _____, because they have _____, they will heap up for themselves _____: and they will turn their _____ away from the _____, and be turned aside to fables."

Definition: "ITCHING EARS" - What does it mean to have "itching ears"? Paul tells Timothy that these people **"will not endure sound doctrine,"** which means **they DON'T WANT to HEAR what the Bible says**, they want a "better" answer. It also means they want a "quicker" answer, because the word "endure" means to "continue, to remain firm, to bear with" something. **These people don't want to learn patience by waiting for God's answer**, so they seek for someone else to give them the answer they want to hear. Then, he says "according to **their own desires**" they will seek out and follow after **TEACHERS who will tell them what they WANT to hear**. That's what it means to have **"itching ears."** Many in the churches today are seeking a "prophetic word" that will make them feel better, or give them an answer more in line with **what they already want to do**. Instead of being helped by these prophecies they receive, they usually end up worse off than they were before. God's promises in His word may not always come to pass **on our time schedule**, but it is so much better **to WAIT for God's BEST**, than to HURRY UP and receive Satan's "consolation prize." In the Old Testament, in Numbers, chapters 22-24, we see Balak going to the "prophet" Balaam over and over again, **trying to get another answer than the one God first gave them**. Finally, God had to speak to Balaam through the mouth of a donkey in order to get him to stop. There is a warning for us there as well: **ACCEPT God's answer from His word**, or else YOU may end up getting an answer that makes you look and feel like a donkey!

- **Revelation 2:14** "But I have a few things against you, because you have there _____ who hold the _____ of Balaam, who kept _____ Balak to put a stumbling block before the _____ of _____, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality (fornication)."
- **I Timothy 4:1** "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the _____ some will _____ from the _____, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines (teachings) of _____; speaking _____ in hypocrisy..."
- **II Timothy 3:1-5** "But realize this, that in the _____ difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, _____, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, _____, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self control, brutal, _____ of _____, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness (false Christianity), although they have _____ its power; and _____ such men as these."
- **Jude 12-13 & 16-19** "These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love-feasts (church potluck dinners) when they _____ with you without fear, caring

for themselves (selfish); clouds without water, carried along by winds..... wild waves of the sea, casting up their own _____ like foam; wandering stars, for whom the _____ has been reserved forever." "These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own _____, they _____ arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they were saying to you, 'In the _____ there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.' These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit...."

- **Ephesians 4:14-15** "That we should _____ longer be _____, tossed to and fro and carried about with every _____ of _____, by the _____ of men, in the cunning _____ by which they lie in wait to _____, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ."

Definition: "EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE" - Doctrine means "teaching" - we are NOT to be falling for every new kind of teaching or latest "spiritual fad". **Cults and false teachers** are EVERYWHERE!! Many of them SOUND Christian, or use the name of Jesus, but **they are a mixture of truth and LIES!** Satan is the FATHER OF LIES and a great counterfeiter. Many true Christians get tricked or sucked into false cults because they DO NOT know **what God's word really says!!**

- **I Corinthians 14:20** "Brethren, do not be _____ in understanding; however, in malice be _____, but in understanding be _____."
- **Hebrews 5:12-14** "For though by this time you ought to be _____, you need someone to _____ you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need _____ and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of _____ is unskilled in the _____ of righteousness, for he is a _____. But _____ belongs to those who are of full age (mature, grown up), that is those who by reason of use have their _____ exercised (trained) to discern both _____ and _____."

3-5. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so **the TONGUE is a little MEMBER** and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

- **Romans 6:13** "And do not _____ your _____ as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but _____ yourselves to _____ as being alive from the dead, and your _____ as _____ of righteousness to God."
- **Romans 12:1-2** "I beseech you (beg you) therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you _____ your _____ as a _____ sacrifice, _____ and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the _____ of your _____ that you may prove what is that _____ and _____ will of God."

Definition: "The TONGUE is a little MEMBER" - Members means individual parts of the BODY, such as HANDS, FEET, **TONGUE**, EYES, etc. **The TONGUE, for all its SMALL SIZE, has the power to destroy many lives** through gossip, criticism, and angry or negative words, if used wrongly and not brought under the power of God in

our lives. We have the POWER to CHOOSE to let our body parts be used for the glory of God, as **His INSTRUMENTS or TOOLS** of righteousness, or as INSTRUMENTS or TOOLS for sin. Your tongue is also like the rudder of a ship or the bit of a horse's bridle, in that it will turn your life in whatever direction you choose, depending on how you speak - whether good or bad. You must learn to speak according to what God's word says, and then your life will go in the right direction.

- **Proverbs 6:16-19** "These six things the Lord _____, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying _____, _____ that shed innocent blood, a _____ that devises wicked plans, _____ that are swift in running to evil, a _____ witness who speaks _____, and one who sows discord (with their tongue) among brethren."
- **Ephesians 4:28-29** "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his _____ what is _____, that he may have something to _____ him who is in need. Let no _____ communication (words) proceed out of your _____, but what is _____ for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."
- **Psalms 39:1** "I said, 'I will guard my ways, lest I _____ with my _____; I will restrain my _____ with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me.'"
- **Psalms 34:13** "Keep your _____ from evil, and your _____ from speaking guile (dishonesty, deceit)."
- **Proverbs 15:1-2** "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh _____ stirs up anger. The _____ of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the _____ of _____ pours forth foolishness."
- **Proverbs 8:13** "The fear of the Lord is to _____ evil; _____ and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse _____ I hate."

Definition: "PERVERSE MOUTH" - A perverse mouth is one of the things GOD HATES, because He knows how much damage it can do. Perverse means "turned away from, or opposing what is right or good; **CORRUPT**; improper, stubborn, obstinate." Ephesians 4:29 also tells us that the words that come out of our mouth should be "what is good" and for edification. Edification means to build up - the opposite of "tear down", which OUR TONGUES do many times with harsh, sarcastic, angry words. The way to counteract someone else's harsh angry words is found in Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Sowing seeds of kindness by speaking "a soft word" instead of more angry words, will cause you to reap a harvest of blessing. Sowing more "seeds" of anger into a situation **by speaking more angry words will only add fuel to the fire**, and that is what it means when it says, "See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" Our tongues have the capacity to start a "forest fire" of evil, if we don't control what words we speak. Just as an actual forest fire can be started by one small match or lit cigarette, our tongues, when not under the control of the Holy Spirit, can cause great damage.