

# JAMES 3

A STUDY THROUGH THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

## Teaching the Teachers

James 3:1

Chapter 3  
Will  
Ultimately  
Address



## And This Morning

James is going to address the tongue being employed for a specific purpose:

**Teaching the Word of God**



A.T.  
Robertson  
once said:

“Teachers are  
necessary, but  
incompetent  
and unworthy  
ones do much  
harm.”

## Paul's Warning: 2 Timothy 4:3-4

**3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, **4** and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

# James 3:1

**NASB:** Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

**KJV:** My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

**Root: διδάσκω – “to teach”**

- James 3:1 – “Let not many of you become **teachers**, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”
- **διδάσκαλοι** (masculine noun)

# James Gets Confrontational

He is addressing his  
“brethren” in the faith and  
offers one of the most  
noteworthy pieces of advice  
for the church in the entire  
New Testament.

# As in the Previous 2 Chapters

- James introduces a new subject with a command for the brethren.
- 1:2 – “Consider it all joy, my brethren...”
- 2:1 – “My brethren, do not hold your faith...with an attitude of personal favoritism.”
- 3:1 – “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren...”

# Outline for Today

1. Application in Context
2. Application to Teachers in the Church
3. Application to Followers of Christ



## The Rabbi

- There were many great and saintly Rabbis, but the Rabbi was treated in a way that was liable to ruin the character of any man.
- The very name means 'My great one'.

Rabbi  
begging for  
tzedakah in  
Jerusalem

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# In the Jewish Culture

It was actually held that a man's duty to his Rabbi exceeded his duty to his parents, because his parents only brought him into the life of this world but his teacher brought him into the life of the world to come.

It was also said that if a man's parents and a man's teacher were captured by an enemy, the Rabbi must be ransomed first.

# Teachers (Rabbis) in James' Day

- The synagogue service allowed opportunity for men in the congregation to rise and address the rest of the assembly.
- **Paul in Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:15 –**  
“After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, ‘Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.’”

# It Was Relatively Easy...

- For a Jewish man to gain an opportunity to speak in a local synagogue.
- As James addressed in Chapter 2, the idea that faith (so called) without works was all that is required prompted “many” to set up as “teachers.”



Paul and Timothy  
Witnessed this in Ephesus.

Turn to  
1 Timothy 1:3-7

Consequently...

There were many in James' audience who, though not qualified with ability, aspired to teach others publicly for the sake of prestige or some other motive.

Christians Carried this over  
into the Meetings of the Early  
Church.

Turn to 1 Corinthians  
14:26-33

# The Real Danger

It was desperately easy for a Rabbi to become the kind of person whom Jesus depicted—a spiritual tyrant who made a great show of piety, someone who loved to have the highest place at any function, a person who gloried in the almost subservient respect shown to him in public.

**No profession is more liable to give rise to spiritual and intellectual pride.**



Turn in Your Bibles  
To Matthew 23:1-12

# The Fact of the Matter

The people to whom James is writing covet the prestige given to teachers.

James demands that they should never forget the responsibility.

## Matthew 23:15

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”



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# How Important Are Teachers?

- Wherever they are mentioned in Scripture, they are mentioned with honor.
- In the church at Antioch, they are ranked with the prophets who sent out Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1).
- In Paul's list of those who hold great gifts within the Church, they come second only to the apostles and to the prophets (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).

# A Teacher in the Church is:

- **Required to:**
  - Master the Scriptures
  - Apply the Scriptures to Faith and Life
  - Discern Falsehoods
  - Be Willing to Face Harsher Judgment



# What James is NOT Saying

The church's teachers are elevated to live a more strict and sanctified life than other believers.

Every follower of Christ is called to live a holy life in service to and for the glory of our Lord.

However...

Those that take on the responsibility of teaching and preaching the Word of God will be subject to greater scrutiny and judgment.

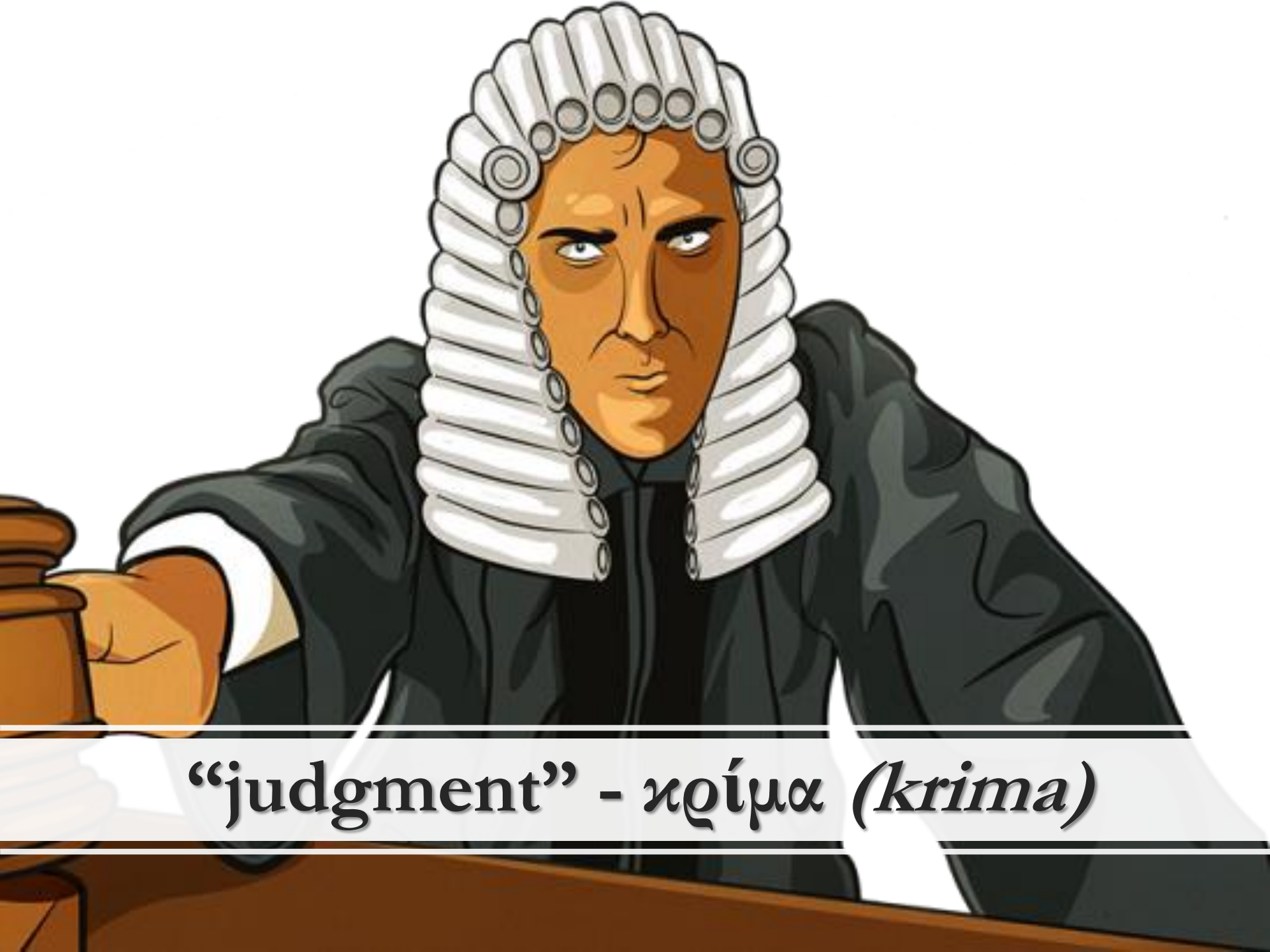


WITH GREAT  
POWER  
COMES GREAT  
RESPON-  
SIBILITY



So, Teachers Will Be  
Judged?

**But What Kind Of Judgment?**



“judgment” - κρίμα (*krima*)

## Notice Also

In a humble, conciliatory spirit, James includes himself: if we teachers abuse the office, we shall receive greater condemnation than those who are mere hearers.

## Look at Luke 12:42-46

**And if Matthew 12:36-37 is True...**

**36** But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. **37** For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

**How Great is the Teacher's  
Responsibility?**

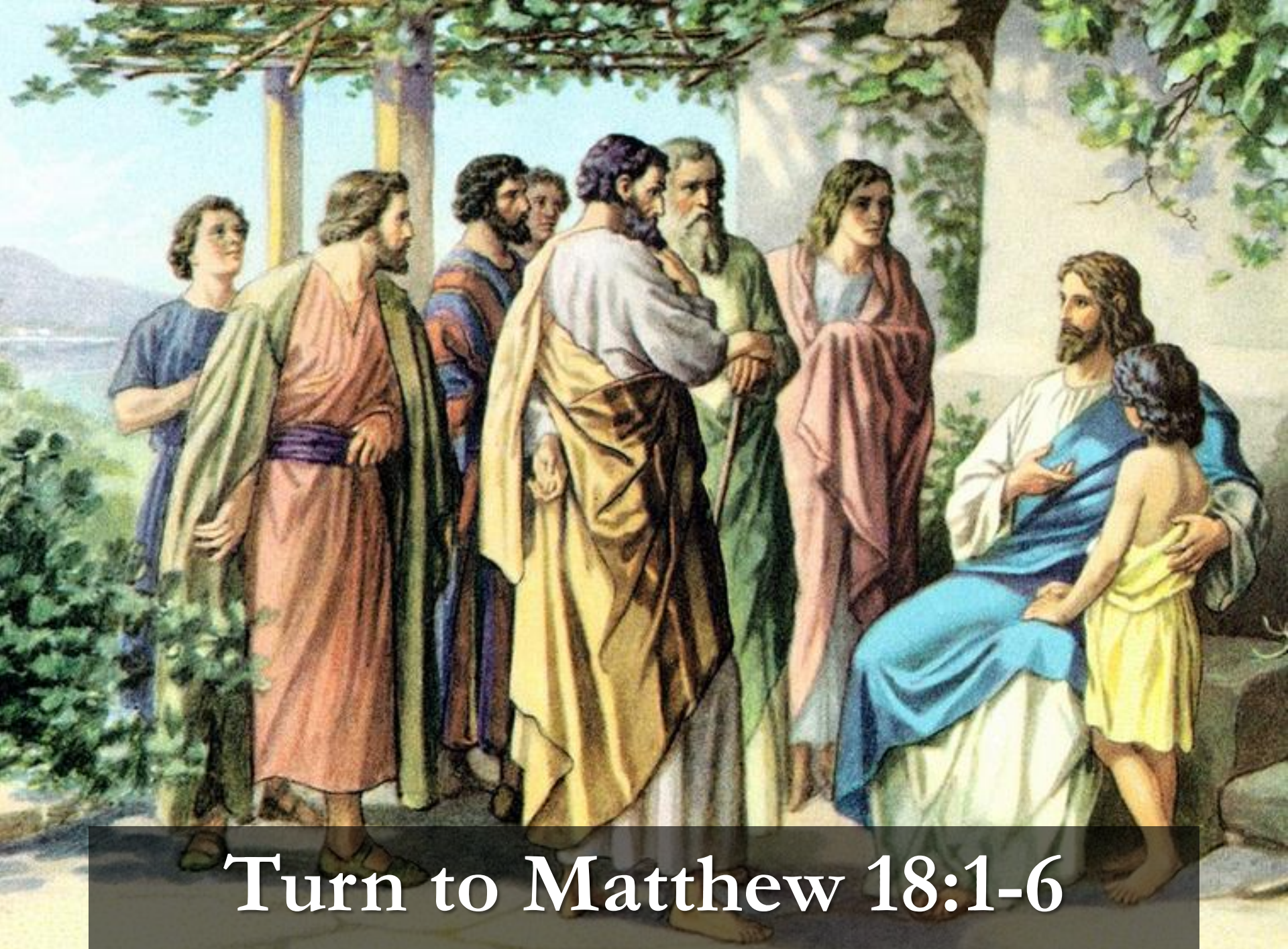


## 2 John 1:9

“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.”

## Hebrews 13:17

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, **for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.** Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.



Turn to Matthew 18:1-6

# “Little Children”

- Jesus to his disciples in John 13:33 –

“Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’”

- The Apostle John in 1 John 2:12 –

“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.”

# Teachers Must Avoid 2 Things

1. They must take every care that they are teaching the truth, and not their own opinions or even their own prejudices.
  - It is fatally easy for teachers to distort the truth and to teach not God's version but their own.
2. They must take great care that they do not contradict their teaching by their lives.
  - They must never get into the position where their students cannot hear what they say for listening to what they are.

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**You May Be Saying:  
“I’m Not a Teacher.”**

**James is talking to you, too.**



## Matthew 28:19-20

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching\*** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

**\*διδάσκοντες** (present active participle)

**The Great Commission Says:**

**Every Christian is  
responsible to teach  
others what God has  
revealed in His Word.**

# Hebrews 5:12-14

12 For though by this time you ought to be **teachers (διδάσκαλοι)**, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Preach the Gospel  
at all times and  
when necessary,  
use words

-st francis of assisi

“Saying, ‘Preach the gospel daily, use words if necessary’ is like saying, ‘Feed the hungry, use food if necessary.’”

- Ligon Duncan



## Church Leaders: 2 Timothy 2:2

“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

# Husbands: Ephesians 5:22-27

**22** Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. **24** But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. **25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

Parents: Proverbs 1:8; 6:20

“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction And do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”

“My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother.”

## Ladies: Titus 2:3-5

**3** Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, **4** so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

# Scripture is Clear

- The office of teacher should not be assumed hastily.
- The teacher is under greater judgment.
- The teacher will give an account.
- Even without the title, we are all called to be “teachers” (Matt. 28:20).
- Mature Christians “teach.”
- Teachers are not limited to the classroom or the pulpit.

**If You Are In Christ**

**You have (or will have)  
teaching responsibilities.**

**And the point is:**

**Teachers Teach!**

## 1 Peter 3:15

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence**”

