

advance themselves and get into a position of authority—they weren't seeking to teach for the good of their brethren, but for their own power and position! In truth, they weren't even speaking true wisdom, at all: *This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.*<sup>16</sup> *For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.* (vs. 15-16)

**So, what should a good teacher look like?** Ultimately, a **real Christian teaches for the right reason**—seeking to show the wisdom from above: *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*<sup>18</sup> *Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.* (vs. 17-18)

**AP** The real Christian seeks to spread Godly wisdom: *pure, ...peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.* This is quite different from the false gospel proclaimed by these false teachers: *earthly, sensual, demonic.* Real Christian teachers teach real Christian teachings—and you will know them by their fruit:

**GL 5.19-26** ~ *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,<sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*<sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*<sup>24</sup> *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*<sup>25</sup> *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*<sup>26</sup> *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

## **CONCLUSION**

As much as TN may be having a teacher shortage now, the church is suffering one even greater: we are experiencing a massive teacher shortage—not just in people willing to stand up in front of the congregation and preach lessons and invitations and teach Bible classes, but in people willing to teach and preach in private! A **real Christian is a proper teacher!**

Rather than looking for an excuse to not need to teach, we ought all of us strive to be able to be teachers—**knowing the power of our tongues**, and **teaching for the right reason**—that the Gospel may be spread in the *meekness of wisdom.*<sup>7</sup>

**DT 6.6-8** ~ *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.<sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.<sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.<sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates*

## **INVITATION**

**QUESTION:** What is a real Christian like?

## **TRN TO JM 3**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **EDUCATION/Teachers/2025 Teacher Shortage in TN**

As the husband of a teacher, let me just tell you: I constantly see the reason for the teacher shortage: the heavy expectations by administration contrasted with its light support, the overwhelming attitude of a new generation of children whose lack of parental guidance and support extend into the classroom day to day (as well as in parent-teacher conferences). When I was younger, I considered becoming a teacher: but it only took one class focused on the administrative challenges behind the teacher's desk to realize that it wasn't for me.

It's difficult to be a good teacher—emphasis on the word **“good”**, there. Sadly, the lack of support and appreciation by administration, parents, and students can result in burn-out—with the result that, too often, the only ones who remain are the bad ones—those who don't care, or who care more about the summers off than the school year in the classroom!

#### **EDUCATION/Teachers/2025 Teacher Shortage in TN – Changing Standards**

This...doesn't seem like a good idea to me. Lowering standards to get more bodies in the classroom seems like exactly the wrong kind of approach. But, I guess we'll see!

### **BACKGROUND (JM 3.1-2)**

These last two weeks, we've been looking at **JM**—a letter written *To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.* (JM 1.1b) We've seen that the goal of the brother of our Lord is to help the church to understand just what it means to be a **real Christian**. In the first chapter, he focused on how the real Christian is to be **patient in trials**. In the second, he reminds us that the real Christian is to be a **practicer of the truth**. And in the third, he turns to the next concept: a real Christian is to be a **proper teacher**.

But, wait...if you've read **JM 3** before, you might argue that I'm missing something: *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.* (JM 3.1) **Doesn't this mean that not all Christians ought to be teachers?** Often, this verse is quoted by people when asked to teach a Bible class or an invitation or a one-on-one Bible Study. *"Let not many of you become teachers..."* they say. And then they check out—after all, clearly, JM was talking about them: go ask someone else.

But Brethren, let's let the Bible interpret the Bible. Let's not forget the writing of the HB writer when speaking about Melchizedek: *of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*<sup>12</sup> **For though by this time you ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.<sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.<sup>14</sup> But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (HB 5.11-

**14)** Wait...so **JM** says not many of his audience should be teachers, and the **HB** writer was complaining that his audience weren't teachers yet. **How are we supposed to mesh these two?**

Simple: the **HB** writer's audience should have been mature—ready to teach others. But instead, they were just letting themselves be taught—lacking maturity and growth. **JM**'s audience, however, were struggling with something: and what they were struggling with made them unqualified to be teachers.

At one point or another, we're all of us not qualified to be teachers—ie: when we're young, when we're first converted, or when we're struggling with a disqualifying sin (as **JM** will speak about). But this should be temporary: *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (EH 4.11-13)* God has given all of us a part to play until we're all united together—grown into a “perfect man”.

All that to say, **JM**'s statement that most of his audience shouldn't be teachers wasn't a good thing—something they should take pride in. Rather, he was basically saying that God wasn't going to lower His standards just because there was a lack of spiritual maturity in this congregation—if they were going to be teachers, they'd be judged with *a stricter judgment*. And they just weren't ready for that yet.

The “teacher shortage” in the church didn't mean that just anyone should become a teacher! Rather, they needed to perfect themselves—for a **real Christian** needed to be a **proper** teacher: and that meant that they needed to get certain things in order—starting with their tongue.

#### **BD1: A Real Christian...Knows the Power of the Tongue (JM 3.2-12)**

#### **BIOLOGY/Tongue/Strength of the Tongue**

**JM 3.2-5a** ~ *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. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.*

**EX:** **JM** compares the tongue to a bit and to rudder: both small things that are able to direct and guide powerful things: specifically, horses and ships. His point is simple: the **real Christian knows the power of the tongue!** It may be small, but it's powerful—and it can do great and dangerous things!

**JM 3.5b-6** ~ *See how great a forest a little fire kindles! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.*

#### **WAR/World War 2/Loose Lips Sink Ships**

**EX:** What's true in war is true in regular life—so many lives have been sunk/burned down by a careless word! And this seemed to be a big part of the troubles with **JM**'s audience: they couldn't control their tongues—so the last thing they should be doing was using them to teach!

**PV 26.20-22** ~ *Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. <sup>21</sup> As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. <sup>22</sup> The words of talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body.*

**BKGRND:** It seems, then, that **JM**'s audience was made up of people who desired to teach—to spread the gospel! But they had serious problems they had to sort through. They were hurting one another with their “**careless words**”—for they'd not learned how to tame their tongues. To be fair, that wasn't a small task: *For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. <sup>8</sup> But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (JM 3.7-8)*

In truth, while the challenge to tame our tongue may seem impossible, it's a duty we must all take seriously. For, *With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (JM 3.9-12)*

**AP:** Brethren, we must all of us strive to learn control of our tongues—ceasing the spreading of hateful and angry words, of gossip, and rumor. We must learn to *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (CS 4.6)* For it doesn't make sense for the Christian to spew out poison and life, spite and love—*Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. (JM 3.11-12)* When we try, the end result is that the people around us don't believe the good we speak because of the evil—the life because of the death!

**PV 18.4** ~ *The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; The wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook.*

#### **BD2: A Real Christian...Teaches for the Right Reason (JM 3.13-18)**

But, back to the original point of the passage: there were many in **JM**'s audience who desired to be teachers. To the crowd, as a whole, he told them that they needed **know the power of their tongues**. **But what about those who were qualified to teach? What about those who weren't spewing poison and fire all over the place every time they opened their mouth?**

**JM 3.13** ~ *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

**EX:** The trustworthy teacher is **one who teaches for the right reason**. **JM** gives an example of two kinds of teachers: those who taught for the right reason with right wisdom, and the one who teaches for the wrong reason out of the wrong kind of wisdom.

The first shows their wisdom in how they live and in their works—done in *meekness of wisdom*. The **real Christian** doesn't fight for his or her influence and authority. Rather, that person acts in meekness—understanding their place and the origin of their wisdom. *But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. (vs. 14)* Those backbiting members in **JM**'s audience were seeking the opportunity to teach out of envy and self-seeking. They were boasting and lying “*against the truth*”. They did anything they could to