

May 16, 2021

## Am I a Servant of God

***"Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly...with the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be."*** James 3:1-12

What does it mean to be a servant of God? As we have hopefully begun to understand, the key to living as a true servant of God is consistency. Our claim to be children of our heavenly Father is either varified or destroyed by the consistency of our lives and words before the world.

The requirements of the life of a servant of God are not difficult to understand although they are certainly difficult to live. God's servants are those who are learning to lean on him through trials, take personal responsibility for falling to temptation, manage conflict effectively, serve others without respect to any bias, demonstrate the truth or our faith through our deeds, and, as in our context for today, are manage our tongues.

James will tell us, ***"The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell."*** (James 3:5-6) No matter what we claim about our lives in regards to our relationship with God, the truth of our claims will be varified by our words or destroyed by them. Even the smallest word can destroy our influence for God.

As James concludes, ***"Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be."*** As believers we cannot praise God and condemn those whom he has created at the same time. This inconsistency in our words makes our faith false. So, how do we begin to manage the power of our tongues?

The problem really comes back to that conflict between our warring natures that we all struggle to overcome. Our Spirit-led self is trying to reflect our consecrated lives through our deeds and through our words. But, our self-serving flesh, continues to demand its own way in both deeds and words. So, we destroy our influence by our inconsistency. As James would tell us, ***"...brothers, this should not be."***

As is always our struggle as believers, we are constantly being confronted by the choice; to live by the Spirit or to live by the flesh. We must choose one or the other. We cannot choose both. As the Apostle Paul commanded the believers in Galatia, ***"...live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."*** (Galatians 5:16)

Ridding our lives of the selfish pursuit of our own way is really a life-long task for believers. As a believer I am commanded to live a Spirit-led life. My words either confirm the Spirit living in me or deny his presence. Giving up my way and denying myself is key to this Spirit-led life and in all honesty, I must acknowledge those times when demanding my own way lead me to use destructive and divisive words?

So, is my claim to be a child of God and his servant confirmed by my words? Or, as is too often the case, do my words contradict my claim to faith in the eyes of those who know me well? It really does come down to consistency over time. Either my words and deeds are consistent with the faith I profess or they are not.

**"The tongue has the power of life and death..."**  
Proverbs 18:21

**"Those who control  
their tongues can also  
control themselves in  
every other way."**

(James 3:2)

