

## Who Should Be a Teacher?

[James 3:1-2](#)

James, Day 14

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.*

- James 3:1-2, ESV

The Constitution sets clear qualifications for the office of President of the United States: One must be native-born citizen, 35 years old, and a resident of the United States for 14 years. Beyond that, to be president, you have to be elected by a majority of the electoral college. Similarly, to play in the NBA, the qualifications are clear: You have to be a really good basketball player, but then an NBA team needs to draft you and sign you to play for them. In both of these examples, the person needs to be both qualified and called or chosen.

In James 3:1, James warns his readers that not many of them should become teachers. James is talking specifically about being a teacher of God's word in the church, perhaps even more specifically about being a teaching elder in the church. The reason for James' warning is clear: Teachers will be judged with greater strictness.

So, who should be a teacher, then? If not many should, who should? Well, similar to our examples of the president or an NBA player, a teacher of God's word in the church needs to be both qualified and called. We have to look elsewhere in God's word to get a clear description of the qualifications, but places like 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 tell us that the character and conduct of an elder matters as much, if not more, than the content of his teaching. While James may not be talking exclusively about elders, the same biblical principle applies - the heart of the teacher matters as much as the head, because, as Jesus said, "*out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.*" (Matthew 12:34)

But a teacher should also be called, recognized by a congregation for his character and conduct and competency to teach. If no one wants you to be their teacher, that's good evidence you may not be called or really qualified to teach. Johnny Manziel is an amazingly gifted football player, but no team seems to want him right now, because of his character issues, and so he is not a professional football player.

James then gives a further warning, that no one is able to so control his tongue that he does not sin in what he says. James says "*we all stumble in many ways,*" indicating that the "*perfect man*" he refers to doesn't exist, apart from Jesus. So, if a teacher is going to be judged more strictly and everyone stumbles in what they say, what is the answer to this dilemma? Accountability.

Teachers in the church need to be qualified, called, and accountable. A teacher needs a clear standard for his teaching and a group of people who will hold him accountable to that standard. Ideally, the people who hold him accountable should be both inside and beyond his own congregation. We see evidence of this in the New Testament, as letters are written to warn congregations against false teachers and false teachings in their midst.

Teaching God's word to God's people is a high and holy calling, one to be undertaken in humility and diligence. Only those who are qualified, called, and accountable should undertake the task. Thankfully, by His grace, God has been pleased to bless His church with a good number of sound teachers who can build His people up in the faith. If you've been blessed by a qualified, called, and accountable teacher of God's word, give Him thanks and pray diligently that God will guard the heart, mind, life, and teaching of that teacher.