

# Measuring Maturity

James

- writing to friends – ‘dearly beloved’
- speaking about maturity – pictures to strive for

Mature Christians:

Patient in Trouble – evidence of trust in God that brings deep peace regardless of circumstance.

Peer into the Truth – belief of heart compels action in life. Convinced in a way that demands action.

Practical Touch – heart conviction is seen by choices and actions in life of Christ followers

# Measuring Maturity

*“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.”*

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*“Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 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. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 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. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.” James 3:1-12*

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## Pictures on the Wall:

### Power To Direct – Bit and Rudder

- small item controlling direction of large
- implication – words have the power to influence, direct, divert, discourage, deflect.....
- "the tongue has the power of life and death" 18:21
- 1:19 – "quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry"
- 1:26 – "considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself."

# Measuring Maturity

**Proverbs. 18:21** *"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit "*

**Proverbs 26:20-21** *"Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down. As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife"*

**Proverbs 17:27** *"A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered"*

**Proverbs 14:29** *"A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly."*

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## Power to Destroy – Fire and Animals

- Forest Fire – easy to start, difficult to direct, hard to put out
- Fire burns – scars , spreads, consumes victims
- Wild animals retain ability to damage and destroy
- Handle poison and danger with great care
- Col 4:6 – “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”
- words have destructive power when unleashed without great care

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## Power to Delight – Water and Fruit

- fruit and fresh water – good sources
- words can be refreshing, life giving, renewing
- words can be salty, drying, chaffing – source matter
- Only from pure hearts can God be praised
- What is in your heart revealed in your conversations
  - critical, judgmental, graceless
  - encouraging, loving, grace filled, full of fruit

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True Wisdom – Two types, true and false

*“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincerer. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.” 3:13-18*

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## False Wisdom:

- bitter envy, selfish ambition, disorder, boasting
- root in themselves not God

## True Wisdom:

- humility, pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, sincere
- evidence in the life of a mature believer
- can be trusted to advise and instruct

# Measuring Maturity

## So What

- essentially a trust and faith issue:
  - I can trust God in my difficulties – talk to him about my problems with others, seek His perspective.
  - I will talk to them first – not use my tongue as a weapon of my choosing

### \* Words Need to Be Handled With Care\*

They have power to direct, destroy and delight

### \* Wisdom is Evidenced in Mature Believers \*

Be careful who speaks words into your life