

## “(Would-Be) Teachers Beware” – James 3:1-2

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*[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, [www.welovethegospel.com](http://www.welovethegospel.com)]*

Take your Bible and meet me in James 3...

I feel like today’s sermon is one of those that I’m just preaching to myself and you guys get to sit in on. I think it will prove relevant to all of our lives, but it’s definitely one that wrecks me. The truth conveyed in our text today (and in related biblical passages) has really worked on me this week. Brought me to tears at times. And really fostered some self-examination and repentance, given the high calling placed upon the life of Christian leaders and how often I fall short of the example of Christ. Who am I to preach on the high calling of the pastor? Well, that’s one important aspect to our text. So you should know, I do not stand before you with a sense of adequacy. I stand before you contrite and in desperate need of the Gospel.

The third chapter of James provides us with “the single most sustained discussion in the New Testament on the use of the tongue.”<sup>1</sup> That said, it is by no means all that James has to say on the subject in this epistle (e.g., 1:26; 2:12; 4:1, 11-12). Evidently, the Lord’s brother believed that his readers were having trouble in this area even though they considered themselves pious and upstanding. You might remember, in chapter 1, James stated,

*“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.” (James 1:26)*

The bridling of our tongue—both in not speaking when we shouldn’t and speaking with grace and truth when we should—authenticate the substance and value of our religious profession. Similar to how James showed us in chapter 2 that our works validate our faith, he is going to show us now in chapter 3 that the fruit of our lips serves as a telling litmus test to the condition of our heart. Like works, our words are “another external indicator of one’s inner spiritual condition.”<sup>2</sup> And this, for James, has everything to do with wisdom, which, you might remember, is one the three major themes in the letter.<sup>3</sup>

He introduces this “wordy” section on the wise use of the tongue with a proverb addressed at teachers or would-be teachers. This makes sense given that teachers “are especially vulnerable to failures of speech because their role demands that they speak so much.”<sup>4</sup> This makes it a very heavy subject to preach on, if I’m being honest. There are some texts which you are eager to preach on, but then there are others which can be quite awkward and easy to avoid. This is one of the latter. But this is also one of the reasons I am committed to preaching through books of the Bible expositionally—it forces us into sections that preachers are tempted to avoid and, in time, allows us to get a better sense of the full counsel of God. So here we are. But it is not without a healthy degree of trepidation on my part because, as Daniel Doriani put it, “Paradoxically, every time a teacher rises to explain this verse, he invites judgment on himself.”<sup>5</sup> He’s talking about the first verse of chapter 3. Let’s look at it now, along with the one that comes after. This is God’s Word....

*“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup> 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)*

These are the words that James uses to introduce his exposé on the tongue and they should be sobering. “James here [and in the verses to follow] presents a pessimistic (yet realistic) appraisal of the wickedness often found in human communication.”<sup>6</sup> It’s not the stuff of modern vision boards and classroom posters. It’s not a “Be who

you want to be, just believe in yourself’ kind of a message. It’s not very inspiring. Unless it’s inspiring you to rethink your life, dreams, and aspiration.

James is not very optimistic about your inner strength and resolve because, quite frankly, the Bible gives us no reason to be. You know that, unless you’re one of those people who like to cherry-pick it for inspiration quotes or are in the habit of listening to people who do and sometimes call it “preaching”. No, James cared enough for his readers to tell them plainly, “*Not many of you should become teachers...*” And in the original Greek, he’s quite emphatic on this point.<sup>7</sup>

But what does he mean by “*teachers*”? In this context, he has in mind teachers in the church and probably especially that office of teaching held by those we call “elders” or “pastors” or “overseers” (the three titles in the New Testament used for the same church office). Those called to the office are called primarily to function as teachers of God’s Word. Why would I say? Because when you look at the biblical qualification (in places like 1 Timothy 3)—not the culturally-shaped expectations—you’ll discover that they all have to do with character traits that every Christian is called to pursue and embody, with one exception—“*able to teach*” (1 Tim. 3:2). This is the “one peculiar gift required by men who would be elders or pastors.”<sup>8</sup> And the obvious reason for that is that teaching is their primary responsibility. As Thabiti Anyabwile points out, “Other things are necessary in a church, such as administration, mutual care, and so forth. But the one thing that necessarily sets an elder apart is his ability to teach.”<sup>9</sup>

But what does Paul mean by “the ability to teach”? He is not talking about the ability to teach in general, but the giftedness to teach the Gospel and the Scriptures in particular. Paul is not talking about how well you can teach the mechanics of shooting a jump shot to the players you coach, or your ability to communicate music theory and instrumentation, or your prowess at teaching mathematics and history. You may be a great teacher in any of those venues. But that’s not what Paul’s talking about. And while it may serve you well in pastoral ministry one day, your didactic skill (teaching ability) in those settings doesn’t qualify you for church ministry.

“Paul’s criterion ‘able to teach’ refers to the ability to communicate and apply the truth of Scripture with clarity, coherence, and fruitfulness. Those who have this ability handle the Scripture with fidelity, and others are edified when they do. This ability is not limited to public teaching from the pulpit. Men with this ability might be gifted public teachers, or they might simply be gifted for one-on-one or small group settings. Some men are not exceptional public speakers, but they are teaching and counseling the people around them from Scripture all the time. Such men should not be disqualified from the office as elder.”<sup>10</sup>

So the ability to teach may manifest in various ways, but the content of that teaching is shared among all the elders/pastors in a church. Each individual in that office may not be on the stage preaching week to week, but they should grasp the truth taught and be able to communicate it effectively in some way. They know the Gospel. They regularly communicate the Gospel. They’re no strangers to the Gospel. They know their way around the Bible and can minister readily on the basis of its truth.

This is important because I think a lot of churches get this wrong. Sometimes the people of the church think, “Well yeah, of course, the lead/senior/teaching pastor, he’s got to know the Bible and theology and the gospel well, but not necessarily the administrative/associate/music/youth pastor.” Not according to Paul. They all should be qualified and proven when it comes to handling and teaching the Word of God. If they are not, then no matter how great they are in administration, no matter how gifted they are musically, and no matter how likeable they are with student, they are not biblically qualified to be pastors in a church. They may look qualified in the eyes of the world. But the call of Jesus is based on a different metric.

Paul understood this when he wrote out those lists of qualifications and so did James when he stated that not many should be “teachers” in the church. But that doesn’t mean that those whom God does call should not aspire to the office because the Bible also says, “*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task*” (1 Tim. 3:1). So there is a sense in which the desire to pastor must be present

in those God calls. But sometimes that desire is present for misguided and sinful reasons in people God has not called into pastoral ministry. That's where James comes in and pumps the brakes, saying, "*Not many of you should become teachers...*" He didn't say "not any of you". The aspiration should be present, just not nearly as prominent as it sometimes is.

Perhaps James has in mind what Jesus taught in Matthew 23 concerning the Jewish religious leaders of His day, who didn't really practice what they preached (23:2-3), made life difficult for those under their care (23:4), and overly valued the status and respect that came with their position (23:5-7). So Jesus told His disciples to not seek the title of "rabbi" because that style of leadership was not to be the mark of His followers (23:8). But that's how His disciples would have thought of leadership until they met Jesus.

Remember James is addressing, in all likelihood, a group of Christians that grew up within that same Judaism of those disciples. If that is what they were accustomed to seeing in the scribes and Pharisees, it probably shouldn't surprise us too much that some would default to patterns of leadership in the church that they were used to seeing elsewhere in the world.<sup>11</sup> This led to many problems in the early church and is one of the reasons that the New Testament is filled with so much content related to false teaching and false teachers. James, writing probably the earliest epistle in the New Testament, sees the problem coming and is seeking to address and curtail it by warning his readers to rethink their teaching aspirations.

I actually think the temptation is quite similar today. The Jewish Christians grew up seeing people fawn over the rabbis, scribes, and Pharisees. Those positions were highly respected and exclusive. They were seen as positions of power and influence and, no doubt, they were. And people crave power and influence and the status that comes with it, so it's no wonder that some Christians, not having been accustomed to the cost and character of Christ-like leadership, might look to offices in the church to afford them with what they have been craving all along from the world.

Let me give you a couple examples. I've seen a lot of discontentment among pastors. Trust me I know the temptation. But especially among young pastors, there is often a lot of unrest in their soul. Sometimes they may call it "a holy discontent," but often that's just a cover for regular, old discontent. And why does it exist? Because many of their biggest influences were big name pastors they didn't really have access to personally. But they saw their platforms. They saw their influence. They saw their crowds. They saw certain aspects of their public ministry (which is actually only a small part of their actual ministry) and envy and lust set in. They start evaluating opportunities based exclusively on how much closer it gets them to that "dream" position. Opportunities and people become stepping-stones to build a platform. And they begin this game of musical chairs at churches. The grass always seems greener over there, but that's just because they're so focused over there that they don't invest much in water where God has planted them.

And don't get me wrong, not everyone that God calls to ministry does He intend to keep there for the long haul and not everyone that leaves a position is leaving for bad reasons. There have been people that God has called to serve in our church for short stints, but we are grateful for the time we had and we can see their impact. But I can tell you that there are a lot of guys cycling through ministries like a revolving door and it has a lot to do with the condition of their heart and ungodly ambitions. It's like when someone comes to me and says they want to be a vocational missionary, but then I ask them who they are sharing the Gospel with these days and they look at me with a blank face. Who knows, maybe God is calling them to be a vocational missionary. But if you're not doing it now, where you have cultural advantages in place, then maybe what you really want is not to be a missionary but to be *known* as a missionary. You see the difference?

Here's another example. This one from music. Have you ever noticed how sometimes when Christian musicians make it big, some of them begin to compromise lyrically. It's often a drift. A slow drift. But when their skill as a musician begins to get noticed, the draw of a secular platform that can expand their "reach" starts to look more and more alluring. That platform would not be there if they just sing about Jesus. So it starts with, "Well, I just want to reach more people" and they begin to sing about Jesus less, until eventually they're not really

singing about Jesus at all. I'm sure it's very hard to make it in the music industry, but there are artists, knowing this (consciously or subconsciously), who make Christian music because it's probably a little easier to break into that genre. It's a steppingstone. And lots of people would be willing to sing about Jesus, if it would get them what they really want.<sup>12</sup>

But that platform will only grow to a point. And when they hit that point, that's when the temptations to compromise seem the loudest. Not everyone does, to be sure. A lot of these musicians are the real deal, through and through. But when compromise does occur, especially at those predictable moments, we cannot help but wonder whose glory they were really seeking. Was it Christ's? Or was He just a means to their end? Don't get me wrong, people can make excellent music to the glory of God that doesn't necessarily get categorized as "Christian" music. But sometimes we just point that out to assuage our conscience when we compromise. And in both this example and the one before, the platform is not going to satisfy for long because there will always be a bigger platform that someone else has. The itch remains. Because we have tended to the externals and not to the heart.

Let's be honest, in a hundred years no one will likely remember any of our names. And that's okay. That's the way it should be. But for all eternity people are going to be exalting the name of Jesus and He is going to remember how much we made of His name in this short life. Better to live for His glory in obscurity, then grasp for the accolades of this world and lose them all and be forgotten anyway.

But why should not many become teachers according to James? Look at the second half of verse 1. It has to do with judgment on the teachers. "*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*" He's not talking about the judgment that others will afflict them with in criticism (though that's part of the gig), but the judgement that they will face before God. In chapter 4, verse 12, James refers to God as the "*one lawgiver and judge,*" so the judgment in view is likely divine and not human.<sup>13</sup> "Because teaching in [James'] world was almost exclusively oral, it seems reasonable to view James as arguing that the accountability is for verbal blunders in teaching others (cf. Jesus in Mt 23:13; Mk 12:38–40; Lk 12:48b; 20:47)."<sup>14</sup> This is why the warning comes in this section on the tongue.

That said, in a day when our words are felt as much, if not more, through how we use our thumbs and keyboards, the principle in question would apply more broadly. Some pastors write today and many are on social media. This means that their words may travel far beyond the people who hear their sermons. As Ligon Duncan explained:

"It turns out social media simply is another way of exercising our tongues, either for good or for ill. Social media amplifies the reach of our tongues. It lets our private thoughts encircle the globe and brings into public discussion conversations and statements that once would have been contained to a small circle of friends bantering in a coffee shop. That means it has huge potential for evil, because we are sinners, and as James reminds us, the tongue is hard to tame."<sup>15</sup>

I wonder if James was writing in 2021, if he would have added a paragraph to chapter 3 on "taming our digital tongues" aimed at Christian pastors. When Paul wrote to Timothy instructions on how to lead in the church at Ephesus, he said the following:

"*Command and teach these things.* <sup>12</sup> *Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.* <sup>13</sup> *Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.* <sup>14</sup> *Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.* <sup>15</sup> *Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.* <sup>16</sup> *Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*" (1 Timothy 4:11-16)

Clearly Paul wanted to stress the importance of teaching for his younger protégé. But what I think is sometimes missed by the modern pastor is that line about setting other believers “*an example in speech*” (4:12). Why is that important? “Because what those in leadership model is often embraced by those who follow.”<sup>16</sup> And this can actually be quantified. Let me give you an example, which I stumbled on in great book by Daniel Darling called, *A Way with Words: Using Our Online Conversations for Good*.

Not too long ago, The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and Lifeway Christian Resource (both Southern Baptist entities) put together a large survey related to American evangelicals and civility.

“The research created what they call a 'civility index.' Among the findings was this distressing data point: *evangelicals whose political views were shaped by prominent Christian leaders registered a very low civility score*. This is interesting when you consider that the survey also found that those who have deeply held beliefs on issues such as abortion often scored high on the civility index. So the lack of civility wasn't a result of believing, as most evangelicals do, that human life begins at conception, or that marriage is between one man and one woman, but the result of watching prominent Christian leaders engage politics at the national level. In other words, many leaders have done the opposite of 1 Timothy 4:12 and have set a bad example in their speech. In doing so, they have given permission for their followers to violate what they know is a biblical imperative to speak with grace.”<sup>17</sup>

That's a pretty troubling finding. Now, to be sure, Paul was not suggesting to Timothy, nor was James suggesting to his readers, that pastors shouldn't ever speak out about issues that are pressing in our day or prominent in the discourse of our day. Sometimes we should. Sometimes we must. “And there are times when we need to forcefully, even prophetically, speak out against injustice and false teaching.” But we also must recognize that people are influenced not just by what we say, but by how we say it. Therefore, we should probably regularly be asking ourselves, “What is my online speech modeling for others?”<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, as Darling points out,

“Our present moment doesn't incentivize this kind of responsible behavior, so we don't have many leaders who understand the weight of their leadership. As a result, in rallying their most fervent supporters, many leaders may be inflaming their worst passions.”<sup>19</sup>

Of course, leaders are not necessarily responsible for all the actions of all their followers. But we may be culpable to the degree that they are just following our lead. We know this instinctively which is why people debate where the line is for an “impeachable offense,” but Paul is concerned here with what constitutes a “disqualifying offense” and we have to wonder if the patterns seen on some Christian leaders' social media posts might fit the bill. And sometimes pastors push back and say, “Yeah, but Paul also says that pastors are supposed to know sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it.” Amen. He does. That's part of our job too. Particularly when those who contradict it seem to have some influence over the people under our care. But... You can't forget what Paul says before that. He prioritizes gentleness.

“*For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,*<sup>8</sup> *but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.*<sup>9</sup> *He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*” (Titus 1:7-9)

They are not to be arrogant. Not to be quick-tempered. Not violent. But hospitable. Self-controlled. Disciplined. They rebuke at times those who contradict sound doctrine. Absolutely. But I'm quite sure that a person who is not characterized by those earlier qualities is probably not the best person to pick up the rebuking mantle. I love the way Darling puts it: “You can't be an internet troll and a Christian leader, according to the Bible. You just can't.”<sup>20</sup>

Yet even though James likely has in mind those “teachers” who operate in an official capacity as elders/pastors in a church, the principle in play does extend beyond this office. James knows that their influence will be greatest among God’s people and so they should expect greater divine scrutiny and judgment. There is a relationship between the degree of their power and influence and the degree of divine scrutiny and judgment. But just because a person doesn’t have the most influence, doesn’t mean they have none. And it certainly doesn’t mean that they won’t have to answer to God for what they do with that influence.

So, in a sense, what James is addressing here should give all us a reason to consider how we are using the influence that God has afforded us, whether we are a pastor, a parent, or a president.<sup>21</sup> You may not be one of our pastors, but do you teach in the church? Then there is a great responsibility that you hold and God is mindful of what you do with it. Do you teach in the school system? Then God has given you an incredible privilege to shape a new generation of people and that influence will have longstanding consequences, for you and for those you teach. Are you a parent? Then God has given you—not the children’s director or the youth pastor—the primary responsibility of discipling your children. We want to help you and equip you in that area, but when the day of reckoning comes, your name is going to be at the top of the list because God has given you that charge. Are you a Christian? Then there is a sense in which you too are a teacher of God’s Word, since, you’ll remember, the Great Commission involves us in disciple-making, which means we will be “teaching” those we disciple to observe the commands of Jesus (Matt. 28:20).

So the principle that teachers will be judged according to what they teach, applies more broadly than to the “teachers” that James is singling out here—people like me. And he hints at this in the subsequent verses where his focus is clearly on the Christian community at large. We all have influence and we all will have to give an account for how we use our words. Jesus said, “*I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned*” (Matthew 12:36-37). James felt the weight of that. And not surprisingly, then, he starts with the most prominent teaching platform in the church—which was one he was called to as well—because, as Jesus stated, “*Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required*” (Luke 12:48). Teacher beware. Kent Hughes writes,

“Every one of us—no exceptions—will stand before the *Bema*, the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear that while believers will *not* stand in judgment for their sin (Romans 8:1), and salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8, 9), *the works of believers will nevertheless be judged*: ‘For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ’ (2 Corinthians 5:10). ‘So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God’ (Romans 14:12). The picture the Bible gives of this judgment is one of individual believers presenting their lives’ works to Christ in the form of buildings. The eternal foundation of each building is Christ, but the structures vary. Some are made totally of wood, hay, and straw. Others are of gold, silver, and precious stones. Still others are composite structures of all the elements. Each life will be publicly subjected to the revealing torch of Christ’s judgment, and with the flames will come the moment of truth...”<sup>22</sup>

He has in mind the teaching of 1 Corinthians 3...

“*Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—<sup>13</sup> each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. <sup>14</sup> If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*” (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

We all have influence. And influence is a good thing. Jesus does liken His followers to salt, which almost certainly has to do with having influence on the world around (Matt. 5:13). The problem isn’t influence. It’s what we do with it. Held loosely and stewarded for God’s glory, influence is a wonderful thing. Used poorly and it can make for an “addictive drug” and a horrible god. And when it leads to fame, even in our small little

circle, it “can turn people into narcissistic, self-centered bullies”, who wield power “to exploit and manipulate.”<sup>23</sup> And since we all have some influence, we will all be susceptible to folly.

And what makes James’ warning—that teachers “*will be judged with greater strictness*” because of their influence—even more humbling is what James says in next verse,

*“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 3:2)

We will consider this verse more next week. But do you see his logic? The hardest sins to avoid are sins of the tongue. It is primarily through speech that a teacher influences other. So if they don’t exercise their words with wisdom, they can do a lot of damage and wreck a lot of lives. That leads to a stricter judgment. And Jesus, let’s not forget, said, on one occasion, that this judgment would be worse than having “*a great millstone fastened around the neck*” and being drown in the sea (Matt. 18:6). Again, I say: Teacher beware.

There are some significant implications of all of this, but I think they will be best to unpack in a few weeks, once we have wrapped up this chapter. To control the tongue, we have to understand the tongue and its power. That is where James is going to turn our attention. And after we consider what he says in the rest of the chapter, I think we will circle back up to the top of the chapter and wrestle with some of these implications for us as pastors, for you as individual church members, and for us as a corporate body. And this last matter will help us to see why the biblical pattern of a plurality of elders is important and should influence the direction of our ministry together. But for today, here are just two simple and obvious implications of our text:

### **Not Many of You Should Be Pastors**

That’s verse 1. And, second, verse 2 reminds us...

### **Every Pastor Needs the Gospel Too**

Why? “*For we all stumble in many ways...*”

Let’s pray...

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<sup>1</sup> Sinclair Ferguson, "The Tongue, the Bridle, and the Blessing: An Exposition of James 3:1-12," Desiring God 2008 National Conference: The Power of Words and the Wonder of God, accessed online as of February 27, 2021, at: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-tongue-the-bridle-and-the-blessing-an-exposition-of-james-3-1-12>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert L. Plummer, "James," in *Hebrews-Revelation* (ESVEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 257.

<sup>3</sup> See previous sermon in this series, including, "When You Need Wisdom (Part 1)" and "When You Need Wisdom (Part 2)" and "When You Need Wisdom (Part 3)." These can be found on our website at [https://welovethegospel.com/resources/sermons/#series-sort\\_gospel-on-the-ground](https://welovethegospel.com/resources/sermons/#series-sort_gospel-on-the-ground).

<sup>4</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, *James* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 105.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Plummer, 257.

<sup>7</sup> Notice the way James places the negative μή at the head of the clause, which is usually done for emphasis.

<sup>8</sup> Thabit M. Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 78.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "Within the early church the position of teacher was one of high status. As noted earlier, the human desire for status is endemic to the Roman world, and while many sought to meet this need by joining the *collegia*, some sought illegitimately to meet the need by joining the church. The respect granted to teachers within Judaism out not to be ignored wither. There was evidently a serious problem in this regard in the early church. Without any clear standards, anyone could be put forward as an authority, and even Paul was challenged on this matter on occasion." David P. Nystrom, *James* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 175.

<sup>12</sup> While I cannot make any judgment on their motives or the nature of their upbringings or the orthodoxy of the churches that they grew up in, it is quite startling to learn of all the famous musicians who got their start singing Christian music. Justin Timberlake, the son of a Baptist choir director, started his young career in a young choir singing about God bringing Jesus back, now Justin is probably best known for a song where he boasts about bringing "sexy" back. Katy Perry, daughter of a Pentecostal pastor, had a debut album that was in the genre of Christian rock (under her given name Katy Hudson). The list of famous musicians who got their start in church choirs includes the likes of Ed Sheeran, Usher, Avril Lavign, Jessica Simpson, R Kelly, Snoop Dogg, Jamie Fox, and Britney Spears (just to name a few).

<sup>13</sup> Chris A. Vlachos, *James* (EGGNT; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013), 105.

<sup>14</sup> Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 152.

<sup>15</sup> Ligon Duncan, "Some Thoughts on Social Media in Today's Culture and Climate," Reformed Theological Seminary, accessed February 25, 2021, <http://rts.edu/resources/some-thoughts-on-social-media-in-todays-culture-and-climate/>.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Darling, *A Way with Words: Using Our Online Conversations for Good* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 83.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 83-84.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 84-85.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>22</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works* (PW; Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 128-129.

<sup>23</sup> Darling, 77.