

REAL FAITH IN THE REAL WORLD

Practical Wisdom From the Book of James

SMALL GROUP LESSON 5

James 3:1-18

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In Chapter 3, James returns again to a theme raised earlier in his letter - how we can control the most powerful weapon ever unleashed on humanity - the human tongue. This small organ can build up or destroy; it can incite to unspeakable evil or bring glory to God through worship and godly encouragement. In our discussion, we'll consider the influence of the tongue and how we can use its power for good.

[Read James 3:1-18 together](#)

Question: Which teacher had the most significant impact on your life?

Question: In verse 1, why do you think teachers will be judged more strictly?

In verses 3 to 6, James offers three illustrations for the tongue.

Question: What are they, and what does each reveal about the tongue's power?

Illustration #1 –

Illustration #2 –

Illustration #3 –

Question: In verses 9 to 12, how is it possible for human beings to curse others and praise God? What does this say about human nature?

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The Bible has a lot to say about the power of our words and our tongue. Read these verses and discuss how they relate to what you've been reading in James:

- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 10:21
- Proverbs 12:18
- Proverbs 15:4
- Proverbs 18:21

James says that we will all stumble, and that none of us will be able to keep our tongues in check. A key message from James is that we can't change our behavior from the outside in, but that God has to make a change in our inner being in order for the fruit which comes out of us to change.

Question: Have you found it to be true that as your inner life is more and more submitted to God that it helps in how you use your tongue? In what ways?

Question: How can we invite God's work in our life in such a way that it affects the way we speak to others?

Question: What can we do when we "stumble" in our speech and speak in a way that hurts others or is not consistent with our faith?

Question: In verses 13 to 18, how does earthly wisdom differ from heavenly wisdom? How do you get heavenly wisdom?

FOR PRAYER

Possible area to ask for prayer:

- Has God put a person or situation on your heart right now that you feel needs to be healed, changed, or reconciled, because of your words?
- Share one way in which you would like to ask God to help you with your words and your tongue.