

James Bible Study

Week 5

James 3:1-18

3 Dear brothers and sisters,[a] not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. **2** Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. **4** And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. **5** In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. **6** And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.[b]

7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, **8** but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. **9** Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. **10** And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! **11** Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? **12** Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.[c]

13 If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. **14** But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. **15** For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. **16** For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. **18** And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.[d]

Theme so far from James: "If you say you believe like you should, they why do you behave like you shouldn't?" Beginning in James ch.3 we move to the theme of "If you say you believe like you should, then why do you say things you shouldn't?"

James 3:1-2

- Warning to teachers: Those who have the responsibility of teaching God's Truth will fall under stricter judgment. This is not to deter teaching, but to communicate the seriousness of the position.

- A teacher of God's Word is expected to teach the truth and live the truth.
- James reminds us that our core problem is not the tongue but the heart.

Matthew 15:11, 17-19

James 3:3-5

James wants us to understand the positive and negative effects of the tongue and communicates this with three analogies:

- Bit 3:3 Rudder 3:4 Fire 3:5

James 3:6-8

The tongue is set on fire by hell. Comparison is *gehenna*: The tongue lets everyone see, hear and smell the wickedness in our hearts.

- James says the humans, on their own, do not have the ability to keep their tongues controlled. But if you know Christ personally, His power through the Holy Spirit's presence can change your heart and take full control of your tongue.
- Unguarded, the tongue is full of deadly poison. 3:8 It can kill relationships, and ruin a witness. Romans 3:13-14

James 3:9-12

- We often have blessing and cursing from the same mouth... James says it should not be the case. What is the fruit of our speech?
- Is the product of our words consistent with the source, that is supposed to be the Holy Spirit. Matthew 7:8
- The tongue defiles, defies and displays. So, we must not attempt self-control but surrender to God's control.

James 3:13-18

Real faith produces genuine humility: We are to rely on God given wisdom not human wisdom. James 1:5 Our wisdom comes from above or below.

- Wisdom produces gentleness. 2 Timothy 2:24

Four Characteristics of earthly wisdom rather than wisdom from God:
Arrogance, Lying, Earthly/Natural, Demonic.

Godly Wisdom: Pure, Peaceable, Gentle, Reasonable, Merciful, Unwavering

So James asks, If you claim to have wisdom like you should, why do you live like you shouldn't.