

# WOMEN IN THE WORD FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

## THE BOOK OF JAMES – Growing Up in Christ

Scripture Reference Notes – October 24, 2023

Lesson Five

The Tongue – James 3:1-12

The Life Application Study Bible breaks the book of James down by chapter.

Chapter Summary:

Chapter 1: Confident stand - What a Christian has.

Chapter 2: Compassionate service - What a Christian does.

**Chapter 3: Careful speech - What a Christian says.**

Chapter 4: Contrite submission – What a Christian feels.

Chapter 5: Concerning sharing – What a Christian gives.

**James 3:1 – Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.**

**Moody:** “Many of the Jewish Christian readers longed to become Bible teachers. According to 1 Cor 11-14, anyone (any man) in the worship service of that day (largely unstructured) could get up and teach even though he was not a gifted or suited teacher. That’s why James says that those who teach will be judged more strictly.”

So why is James exhorting the Jewish believers not to presume to be teachers?  
The teacher will be held accountable and judged more strictly. Why?

Taken from a book called, **Hung by the Tongue, Francis P. Martin:**

1. “Words are the teacher’s main tool.”
2. “His/her words are many, good chance to offend.”
3. “He/she speaks to more ears than others do.”
4. “Because of his/her position, some people will take his/her words and live by them.”

**Proverbs 12:17 – A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies.**

**1 Timothy 1:3 – As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay here in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer.**

**1 Timothy 6:3-5 – If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.**

**2 Timothy 4:2 – Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction.**

**Ephesians 4:11-13– It is he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**

**Ephesians 4:15 – Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.**

**Matthew 7:1 – Do not judge, or you too will be judged.**

**Romans 2:21 – you, then. Who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?**

**Matthew 15:10-11 – Jesus called the crowd to him and said, listen and understand. What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’**

**Hodges:** “If it were possible to avoid stumbling in the use of the tongue, it would be possible to avoid all stumbling.”

**Proverbs 10:19 – When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.**

**Ecclesiastes 7:20 – There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.**

**Matthew 15:13-14 – He replied, every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit. (Speaking of the Pharisees who have led people stray).**

**Matthew 15:17-19 – Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth comes from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what makes a man 'unclean' but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'**

**Proverbs 12:6 – The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them.**

**James 3:2 – 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.**

**Don Den Hartog**– James lived with a perfect man, walked with a perfect man. He knows what a perfect man is.

**Hebrews 5:8-9 – Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.**

**Hebrews 7:28 – For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.**

Perfect in this sense means: James says, perfect man, (teleios) which means 'mature,' disciplining the tongue, keeping control of his whole body, keeping it in check.

Hodges believes he might mean something like 'flawless.'" But as we know, there is no such man because humanly speaking, no one can tame the tongue.

**James 1:26 – If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.**

**Philippians 3:12 – Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Jesus took hold of me.**

**Bible Margin:** The Bible describes maturity by how we learn and understand the Word of God, implement the truth of God into our lives and allow God to use us to teach others to grow in the faith.

**Proverbs 4:20-27 – My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze**

**directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.**

**Quaker proverb:** Of your unspoken words, you are the master; of your spoken words, the servant; of your written words, the slave.”

**James 3:3-5 – 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. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

James uses these as illustrations regarding controlling the tongue. He uses bridling the horse, (**bridle:** A harness, consisting of a headstall, bit, and reins, fitted about a horse’s head and used to restrain and guide the animal), steering the ship with a small rudder (**rudder:** A vertically hinged plate of metal fiberglass, or wood mounted at the stern of a ship or boat for directing its course) and a **small spark of fire** (like a lighted match).

**Colossians 4:6 – Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.**

**Proverbs 10:21 – The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment.**

**Psalms 15:1-2 – A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.**

**Proverbs 10:20 – The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value.**

**Proverbs 12:18 – Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

**Proverbs 17:20 – A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble.**

**Proverbs 15:4 – The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.**

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

**Proverbs 28:23 – He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.**

**Proverbs 12:22 – The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.**

**Proverbs 21:23 – He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.**

**From our study book,** “The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue, man can praise God, pray, preach the Word, and lead the lost to Christ. What a privilege! But with that same tongue he can tell lies that could ruin a man’s reputation or break a person’s heart. The ability to speak words is the ability to influence others and accomplish tremendous tasks, and yet we take this ability for granted.”

**James 3:6 – The tongue is also 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.**

**Proverbs 25:28 – Like the city whose walls are broken down, is a man who lacks self-control.**

**Proverbs 16:28 – A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.**

**Proverbs 17:20 – A man of perverse heart does not prosper, he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble.**

**Proverbs 18:6 - A fool's lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating.**

**Proverbs 19:5 - A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.**

**Proverbs 26:28 – A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.**

**John 8:44 – You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

**Tyndale Bible Commentary -** “The fire which purifies, and illuminates is kindled by the Holy Spirit and descends from above (Acts 2:2-3). The fire which inflames human passion and infects human life throughout its entire existence is kindled by the devil and comes from beneath.”

**James 3:7-8 – 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.**

Human beings are capable of taming animals but cannot tame the tongue.

**Genesis 1:26-28 – Then God said, let us make man in our own image, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, over all the creatures that move on the ground. So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.**

**Psalm 8:6-8 – You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet; all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the sea.**

James said that no man can tame the tongue. He does not say that the tongue cannot be tamed. Then who can? What man cannot do; God can.

**Isaiah 6:5 – Woe to me, I cried. I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.**

**Romans 6:21-25 – So, I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being, I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**Philippians 2:13 – for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.**

**James 3:9-12 – With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10-Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11-Can both fresh water and saltwater flow from the same spring? 12-My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.**

**Genesis 1:26a and 27 – Then God said, Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.**

**Tony Evans: “To verbally attack another human being is to attack God because people are made in his likeness.”**

**Ephesians 4:29 – Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**

Jesus used a similar example in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:16 – By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?**

**Proverbs 18:4 – The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters; but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.**

**Proverbs 10:11 – The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.**

**Proverbs 13:14 – The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.**

**Proverbs 12:18 – Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

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

**NT Wright:** “What James is teaching here is consistency. He wants people to follow Jesus through and through, to be blessing-only people rather than blessing-and-cursing people.

A person with a harsh tongue, has an angry heart.

A person with a negative tongue, has a fearful heart.

A person with an overactive tongue, has an unsettled heart.

A person with a boasting tongue, has an insecure heart.

A person with a filthy tongue, has an impure heart.

A person who is critical all the time, has a bitter heart.

A person who is always encouraging, has a grateful heart.

A person who speaks gently, has a giving heart.

A person who speaks truthful, has an honest heart.

What kind of heart do you have?

**2 Timothy 1:6-7 – For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.**

*Next week: October 31 – Lesson 6 – Wisdom (James 3:13-18)*

## **Don't Open Your Mouth When:**

- In the heat of anger – Proverbs 14:17
- When you don't have all the facts – Proverbs 18:13
- When you haven't verified the story – Deuteronomy 17:6
- If your words will offend a weaker brother – 1 Corinthians 8:11
- If your words will be a poor reflection of the Lord or of your friends and family – 1 Peter 2:22-23
- When you are tempted to joke about sin – Proverbs 14:9
- When you would be ashamed of your words later – Proverbs 3:3
- When you are tempted to make light of holy things – Ecclesiastes 5:2
- If your words would convey a wrong impression – Proverbs 17:27
- If the issue is none of your business – Proverbs 14:10
- When you are tempted to tell an outright lie – Proverbs 4:24
- If your words will damage someone's reputation – Proverbs 16:27
- If your words will destroy a friendship – Proverbs 25:28
- When you are feeling critical – James 3:9
- If you cannot speak without yelling – Proverbs 18:21
- When it is time to listen – Proverbs 13:1
- If you may have to eat your words later – Proverbs 18:21
- If you have already more than one time (then it becomes nagging) – Proverbs 15:13
- When you are tempted to flatter a wicked person – Proverbs 24:24
- When you are supposed to be working instead – Proverbs 14:23

**Proverbs 21:23 – He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.**