

# JIM

# CLASS

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF JAMES

## JIM CLASS, PART 4: FEEL THE BURN

Like a small spark that has the potential to scorch an entire green forest, our tongues are untamable, with the power to control our whole bodies. We have a tool that can be used to build up those around us or tear them down in just a few words. What do we do with that kind of power? We can't lock it away. But we can, by God's grace, learn to control it.

**BIG IDEA:** The tongue controls the course of your entire life!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*\* Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. Think of an example of someone who famously lost control of their mouth. What's your perception of that person? What consequences do you assume they faced?
2. Who has significantly impacted your life with their words? Were their words that shaped you positive or negative? Discuss why it's easier to remember the harsh words of those who hurt you than the kind words of those who encouraged you.
3. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read [James 3:1-12](#).*

*<sup>1</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. <sup>4</sup> And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.*

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

[James 3:1-12 \(NLT\)](#)

4. List together the images that James paints of the power of the tongue. Which of these comparisons do you identify with the most?
5. James used the metaphor of a small spark starting a great forest fire to illustrate the power of our tongues. Share some of the examples of people who have started "forest fires" with their words. What kind of damage did they do?

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7. What is the cause of that duality? When we curse someone, what or whom are we cursing? Toward what person or persons do you need help to remember that they are made in God's image, and why is that challenging for you?
8. In which relationship do you most often find yourself losing control of your mouth? Have you faced any relational consequences as a result?
9. It can be hard to come to grips with how powerful our words can be. It helps to have a clear plan on how to respond when you're faced with losing control. In which of the following areas below do you need the most help?

## MOVING FORWARD

We are powerful because our words are powerful. Our mouths have more destructive power than any other part of the body. The good news is that we also have the power to avoid the consequences of an untamed tongue if we choose to take James' wisdom to heart and surrender this powerful tool to God. Take time this week to pray:

*"Heavenly Father, remind me to be quick to listen and slow to speak."*

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*We all make many mistakes, but those who control their tongues can also control themselves in every other way. People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is an uncontrollable evil, full of deadly poison.*

James 3:2, 7-8 (NLT)

