

Winter 2021 Bible Study
Week 4 - James 3:1-12

Today's passage focuses on what may be the most universal struggle of all - controlling our speech. The hurtful things we say can cause a breakdown in relationships and inflict wounds much faster than our kind words can heal and build up.

Remember that James previewed this topic in 1:19 & 1:26, and like many other places in this book, he seems to be repeating teachings of Jesus (see Matthew 12:36-37 and Luke 6:43-45).

Discussion

- This section is about speech in general, but James introduces the topic in 3:1 with a statement about teachers. Specifically, he uses the Greek equivalent of the word *Rabbi*. Why do you think he starts a section about words by talking about teachers?
- In this section, James uses images that are common in Greco-Roman culture to discuss speech; other writers and teachers of this time period use a bit and a rudder to describe the way human speech controls the morality of a person. However, other writers suggest that with reason and virtue, a human can bring the tongue under control. How is James' view of the tongue different? (3:8)
- Verses 9-10 focus on how the mouth is used for both blessing and curse. How does this reflect the words of Jesus in Luke 6:45?
- How does this section of James connect to the previous section about faith and works?
- Can you reflect upon a time when taming your tongue was difficult, but worth the result of choosing tender speech? What about a time when quick words caused pain?