

IV. Speech: Who Do You Think You're Fooling? (9-11)

- A. Our Mouth Like a Spring
 - i. It is both *unnatural* and *impossible* for a spring to spew both fresh and bitter water. It is one or the other.
 - ii. If we are cursing men made in God's image, it contaminates our praise to God.
- B. Verses 9-11 mandate that the tongue be tamed by the Christian.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How do 3:1-2 with 3:13 help us see the theme of this chapter?
- How is what James says about the power of the tongue similar to the statement, "The pen is mightier than the sword"?
- How much care do you give to the words you communicate on a daily basis? What are some of the ways you communicate them?
- How do the Scriptures call us to use our words and their power for good and love toward others? Discuss and apply.
- Do you talk one way at work to your boss, and another way at home to your wife? Do you speak one way at church when others are watching, and another when your order isn't right at the restaurant for lunch? If so, why do you think that is? Discuss necessary changes.
- Do you come to church to encourage? Do you make effort to speak words to encourage daily so that we are not hardened by sin's deceitfulness? Weekly? How does James' call to spiritual maturity and the texts examined this week call you to grow here?
- Are you purposeful in the use of our words to use them to guide your life into love and good deeds? Do your words ever steer it into wrath and anger—unmerciful judgment?
- Does kindness characterize your speech? To your children? To your spouse? To your parents? To the person who makes a mistake?

Faith that Turns Your World Right Side Up (Part 9)

The Key to Spiritual Maturity

Jerry Cisar — July 3, 2016

Text: James 3:1-11

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

I. Speech: Leadership and Maturity (1, 13)

- A. The chapter is not about teachers, but about spiritual maturity.
 - i. 1 Timothy 3:6
 - ii. James 3:13
- B. James has been addressing opponents who put themselves forth as doctrinal instructors.
- C. Controlled Speech and Teachers of the Word
 - i. 2 Timothy 1:6-7
 - ii. 2 Timothy 2:23-26

II. Speech: Key to Maturity (2-5a)

- A. Controlling our speech is a measure of Christian maturity. (2)
 - i. Some of the ways the recipients of this letter were at fault in what they said. (1:13, 19-20, 26; 2:3-4)

- ii. The book of Proverbs agrees.
 - a) Proverbs 10:19-21
 - b) Proverbs 12:18
- iii. The ultimate measure of spiritual maturity is love.
 - a) James 2:12-13 *Showing mercy* begins with our speech.
 - b) Speech and Love in Proverbs
 - Proverbs 16:28
 - Proverbs 17:9
 - Proverbs 26:20-25
 - c) Actively using our words to love others:
 - 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11
 - Hebrews 3:13
- B. The power of the tongue to guide our lives is exponentially disproportional to its size. (3-5a)
 - i. Don't let the tongue's size fool you (nor the smallness of what you say).
 - ii. The tongue (our words) has magnificent power beyond its deceptively small size.

III. Speech: Key to Destruction (5b-8)

- A. A flame, or spark, is also an incredibly small thing that has a disproportionately powerful and destructive effect.
 - i. Fires are destructive and so is the uncontrolled tongue!
 - ii. The power of this force supersedes human ability to tame.
 - a) James describes wild animals that people can tame, so that the otherwise deadly or dangerous animal can be used for good purposes.
 - b) We all know gossip and slander is deadly, but we always think that we are the exception.
 - You can't tame evil speech!
- B. Jewish Background on the Destructive Power of Evil Speech
 - i. The whole history of sin and death in the human race began with an evil report. (Genesis 3:1-5)
 - ii. Miriam's Leprosy (Numbers 12:1-10)
 - iii. The Spies (Numbers 13, esp. 32-33)
 - iv. Jesus on the Tongue's Power for Evil (Matthew 15:11-20)
- C. It is a restless evil, a deadly poison.