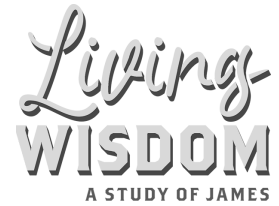


## **JAMES 3:1-12**

*October 12-13, 2022*



1. We will study what the Bible has to say about our speech over the next two weeks. Pause for a moment and prayerfully evaluate how well-controlled your words are in everyday life on a scale of 1-10.

Identify a common situation that tempts you to speak unwisely.

2. Read James 1:19 and 1:26 to remember what James has previously written about our speech. How does James describe the religion of someone who does not control their words well?

Read James 1:22-25. According to verses 22 and 25, what is the right response when we understand God's will for our conduct, including our speech?

What can we expect when we respond with obedient action?

3. Read Matthew 12:33-37. According to Jesus, what is the source of our speech?

4. Read James 3:1. What is James' warning for teachers of God's Word?

While you may not be a formal teacher, each of us has a sphere of influence over which our words carry great value. Think about your life. With whom are your words especially significant or powerful?

What do the words of both James and Jesus cause you to consider about your own speech with those you influence?

5. Carefully read James 3:1-12. In verse 2, James acknowledges we all sin against God in many ways. Why do you think James sees controlling our speech as necessary to becoming spiritually mature in other areas?
  
6. In verses 3-5, James gives two examples of small things that control large objects. What is the purpose of a horse's bit and a ship's rudder?

Think about both wild horses and large ships. What are characteristics of each that make them hard to control?

James uses illustrations from everyday life to warn us that small things like bits, rudders, sparks, and our tongues can have overwhelming influence over large things like horses, ships, forests, and our whole lives. Think about a ship on the open sea. What would happen to that ship if it had a faulty rudder? How would this affect the people and cargo aboard?

We may be as familiar with the destruction of a forest fire as James' original readers. Describe in detail the kind of damage these fires cause.

How is this like the damage an out-of-control tongue can cause in our lives?

7. Look again at James 3:5. In your own words, what important observation is James making about the power of our speech?

What 'great things' have words accomplished in your life? What 'great things' have words destroyed?

8. Read James 3:6-8. List the words and phrases James uses to describe uncontrolled speech.
9. Read James 3:8 once again. While we cannot control our tongue in our own strength, there is hope! Read the following verses and record God's provision for help when we are tempted to use our words poorly.

Psalm 119:171-173

Psalm 141:1-3

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 4:6-8

Based on these verses, write out a simple action plan you can use the next time you need to control your tongue.

10. Read James 3:9-12. What inconsistent use of our speech does James address in these verses?

Look again at James 3:9. What specific sin of the tongue grieves God's heart?

Read 1 John 4:19-21. What are some specific words or phrases you can speak to those you encounter throughout your day?

11. Spend some time considering one or two specific ways you are not honoring God with your words and write them here. Read 1 John 1:9 and confess those sins now.

12. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

## **OUR WORDS UNDER CONTROL** **JAMES 3:1-12**

### **WORDS HOLD ENORMOUS POWER...**

#### **TO GUIDE.**

3:1-5a

- With increased influence comes increased responsibility.
- We are all deeply prone to the wrong use of our words.
- Like the ship's rudder and horse's bit, our words have the \_\_\_\_\_ to steer the course of life toward blessing or destruction.

#### **TO DESTROY.**

3:5b-8

- Like a small spark that ignites a raging fire, our words can cause devastating damage.
- Satan uses our sinful words as tools for his evil purposes.
- In our own strength we cannot \_\_\_\_\_ our tongue. It requires the Lord's help and wisdom.

#### **TO TEAR DOWN OR BUILD UP.**

3:9-12

- We \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ praise God then hypocritically disparage those He created.
- It is wholly unnatural for Christ followers to use our words for both good *and* evil.
- Like a fresh spring, words of encouragement and grace give life to those who hear them.

### **HOW CAN WE WISELY KEEP WATCH OVER OUR WORDS?**

Recognize our words reflect the condition of our hearts.

Pursue Jesus so He can change our hearts.

Honestly assess our daily speech habits before the Lord.

Ask the Holy Spirit for self-control.

Commit to using the gift of speech for God's glory.

**Living Wisdom – James 3:1-12**

**October 12-13, 2022**

**LUKE 12:48b** Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

**PSALM 39:1** I said, “I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence.”

**LUKE 6:45** The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

**PSALM 141:3** Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

**JAMES 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.

**JAMES 1:22-24** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in the mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

**EPHESIANS 4:29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

**PSALM 49: 3** For my words are wise, and my thoughts are filled with insight. (NLT)