

James for Everyman: Building a Faith That Works

Week Two: James 3

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Many early church leaders saw the book of James as lacking in spiritual depth of insight, and yet it remains one of the most practical and studied books of scripture. Written to the believers “of the dispersion” it provides God’s Man with unique insights as to how we are to live when our culture opposes our faith. This series, *James for Everyman*, will challenge you to move beyond a faith that is merely ideological into a faith that works!

James 3:1

“Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.”

James 3:2

“Indeed, we all make mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.”

James set the stage for how serious and challenging it is to control the tongue, turns out tongue control is at the top of the list of spiritual challenges. In today’s culture, our call to govern our words is important than ever because: **Today, words _____ and _____.**

Technology has give our words free, global and instantaneous access to readers everywhere. The speed at which we fire off texts, tweets and snaps is incredible. We read and react, revealing a problem about our culture at large. More than ever... **today, we are a _____ culture.**

Luke 2:46-47

“Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

If we want to “amaze” people in our culture, let’s be men who actually *listen*. Let’s have a new goal in conversation. **Seek to _____, before seeking to be _____.**

James 3:3

“We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.”

As a large horse is directed by a small bit, and a large ship is steered by a small rudder our words direct much of our lives, because: **words are _____.** Like a hammer used to construct a home, or destroy it. Our words have amazing potential for good or evil. We have a choice, **our words can _____ or _____.**

James 3:6

“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.”

It might sound intense, but it's true. We've all felt the pain of saying the worst thing at the worst possible time. We realize a difficult truth, our tongue is fire.

A fire that _____, or a fire that _____.

Proverbs 13:3

"Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything."

Colossians 4:6

"Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

Are we called to silence? Do we tolerate untruth, or unloving speech without raising our voices? No! But, even in our defense of truth **let's match _____ with _____.**

John 6:45

*"A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. **What you say flows from what is in your heart.**"*

Words reveal what's going on inside of us, like a thermometer reveals the sickness that lies within. It's a harsh truth, **harsh words are a _____ problem.**

2 Corinthians 5:17

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

In chapter 1 James taught us that wisdom is a promise for God's man, he need only ask. But, wisdom is far more than simple intelligence. Wisdom is the application of knowledge and understanding. **The _____ we have, is proven by _____.**

James 3:13

"If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with humility that comes from wisdom."

James is calling us to put our knowledge on display, and he also offers a new challenge. He reminds us humility is always the mark of true wisdom and understanding. If that is true, so is the converse.... **_____ arises from our own _____.**

James 3:15-16

"For jealousy and selfishness are not God For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind."

Selfishness leads nowhere good. But here is the real problem for God our culture _____.

We love lifting up the individual, celebrating the success of those who have achieved great things, and we love when we sit in the chair of praise. Yet James is encouraging us that this type of self-promotion should have no place amongst God

Humility is always _____.

James 3:17

“But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”

Does my life leave people saying, “What a _____, or what a _____?”

For Discussion:

- 1. Where is it most challenging for you to control your tongue? In what circumstances and live situations are you most challenged to submit your tongue to the control of the Spirit? What have been the results of letting your tongue run free?**
- 2. Jesus amazed people by how often he listened, and asked questions. Honest assessment time: are you a good listener? Would the people in your life say that you are a good listener? Why or why not?**
- 3. Where have you experienced the power of words by being built up by them? Where have you felt the power of words, as they’ve torn down? How does this memory move you out seeking to allow Christ to influence your speech?**
- 4. Our culture worships self, we love lifting up the individual....the problem is, so does our flesh! Where are you most tempted to freely receive the praises of men? How have you seen that influence your behavior?**
- 5. Humility is not only the hallmark of true wisdom, it is also an opportunity to mimic the heart of our King. In what area of your life do you need to “step down” in humility? What practical steps can you take to choose humility?**