

The Study of James: Contend for the Faith **The Tongue and Influence - James 3:1-12**

Teachers and Spiritual Influencers.

"Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body." (James 3:1-2)

James' Warning to Teachers:

- James warns teachers about their reception by the church of examination and scrutiny.

- Note: It may be that James' warning includes the judgment of the Lord for teachers who handle the word inaccurately.

Stumbling Has Two Aspects:

1. We stumble ourselves.

2. We stumble others.

The Perfect Man: _____.

The Power of the Tongue.

The 3 illustrations of the tongue are about; **Direction**, **Influence**, and **Destruction**.

1. Bit and the Horse.

"If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well." (James 3:3)

2. Rudder and the Ship.

"Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs." (James 3:4)

3. Fire and the Corruption of the Forest.

"So also, the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! "And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell." (James 3:5-6)

The Futility of Taming the Tongue:

"7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water."
(James 3:7-12)

- All kinds of beasts can be tamed. (James 3:7)
- The human tongue cannot be tamed. (James 3:8)
- The tongue reveals the nature of the heart. (James 3:9-12)
- The key is not to seek to tame the tongue but to have a transformation of the heart. You can't change the nature of the tree or the spring. However, God can change the heart of man. This will be discussed in James 3:13-18 next week.

Discussion Questions:

1. Share with your group times that you have gotten embarrassed by what you have said.
2. Discuss the three illustrations of the tongue and the implications to your life, James 3:3-6.
3. Discuss how the tongue creates; Direction, Influence, and Destruction.
4. If the tongue cannot be tamed, how can we control our speech and thereby the direction of our lives, James 3:7-12? Look ahead to James 3:13-18.