

A STUDY OF JAMES—PRACTICAL LIVING

LESSON 3

The POWER of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given humankind. Through speech, we are able to build persons up or tear them down.

Speech gives one the ability to influence others and accomplish great tasks.

Words spoken to children can build confidence and maturity or send them spiraling out of control.

Falsehood: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.

LEADERS AND TEACHERS

A. These persons are held to a higher standard.

B. Greater RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY accompany the authority and prestige of teaching.

C. What is the proper Christian response when leaders and teachers do not maintain a godly standard of living?

THE DANGER OF FIRE

A. 1871 O'Leary Fire in Chicago—100,000 people left homeless—17,500 buildings destroyed—300 people left dead—\$400,000 cost to the city

B. James refers to the tongue as a fire!!!

“In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 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.” (James 3:5-6, NKJV)

Teaching and Leadership are both spiritual gifts. Persons operating in these capacities within the church should do so under the calling of God, knowing that a stricter judgment awaits them.

Teachers are in special danger of misusing their tongues and thereby incurring stricter judgment.

“Remind everyone about these things, and command them in God’s presence to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them. Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. Avoid worthless, foolish talk that only leads to more godless behavior.”

(2 Timothy 2:14-16, NLT)

CONFESSION

“Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect (mature) and could also control ourselves in every other way.” (James 3:2, NLT)

The teacher's eternal reward will reflect the faithfulness of his or her teaching.

THE TONGUE—SMALL BUT POWERFUL

A. Bits

B. Rudder

1. "Set among the members" (among the body of believers)

"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." (James 3:6, NLT)

2. "No man can control the tongue"

"People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison." (James 3:7-8, NLT)

USAGE OF THE TONGUE

A. Bless/Curse

B. Fresh/Bitter

C. Variety of Trees—produce after themselves

D. Spring Water/Salt Water

HEAVENLY VERSUS DEMONIC WISDOM

A. Meekness

B. Bitter Envy/Self-seeking

“But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.” (James 3:14-16, NLT)

The main characteristic of godly wisdom is that it is pure, meaning free from defilement. While earthly wisdom is bitter, filled with envy, and selfishness, godly wisdom is peaceful.

“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 the fruit of 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.” (James 3:17-18, NLT)

Godly wisdom is:

- A. Undivided
- B. Without Favoritism
- C. Unwavering and Consistent
- D. Without Hypocrisy
- E. Sincere and Unpretentious

“And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6, NLT)

“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.” (James 1:5-7, NLT)