

## MAJOR THEMES IN THE CHAPTER:

- a. Controlling the Tongue (The Things You Say).
- b. Wisdom from God.

## HOW THIS CHAPTER FITS INTO THE LARGER MESSAGE OF THE BOOK:

In chapter 1, James wrote, “let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.” In chapter 3, he expounds on his reasons for instructing disciples to speak slowly and cautiously. A person’s tongue (speech) has tremendous power, and if we cannot control what comes out of our mouths, we run the risk of causing great harm.

## APPLICATIONS:

In almost 2,000 years, nothing has changed in regards to the power of the tongue. The Scriptures are constantly reminding disciples of the importance of their speech. Our words can either build up friendships or create enemies. They can either strengthen the bond between brothers and sisters in Christ, or they can fracture relationships. Words can destroy marriages. Words can discourage people from using their God-given talents. Try to be more aware of the words you speak today. Take an inventory. Do your words build people up or do they tear them down?

James’ instruction to be “slow to speak” is especially important in our society. Social media rewards people who publish their stories/opinions/analysis the fastest. Many feel the need to comment on every post and share their take on every breaking news story. I would encourage you to resist that trend. Offer your opinions more slowly. Wait till you have all of the facts and have had ample time to think through a situation before offering your thoughts to the world.

“but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”

- James 3:8 -

# James<sup>3</sup>

## CHAPTER OUTLINE:

### + THE POWER OF THE TONGUE (3:1-12):

- James begins this section by warning people about the risks of becoming a teacher.
- God will judge teachers with greater strictness.
- It is very difficult to avoid sinning when we spend a lot of time talking.
- A person's tongue is small compared to their other body parts, but few body parts possess such great power.
- James compared the tongue to a bit in a horse's mouth, a small rudder on a great ship, and a small fire that eventually burns down an entire forest.
- Human beings have managed to tame almost every animal (livestock, birds, dogs, etc), but nobody is capable of completely taming the tongue.
- The tongue is a "restless evil, full of deadly poison."
- It's unfortunate when disciples use their words to honor God, but then turn around and use them to insult other people.
- The tongue of a disciple should not speak blessings one moment and curses the next.
- You wouldn't go to a spring of water and expect it to produce salt water and fresh water.
- You wouldn't expect to go to a fig tree and find olives growing.
- You wouldn't expect a grapevine to produce figs.
- In a similar way, you shouldn't approach a Christian and find him cursing people.
- Cursing those made in God's image is inconsistent with the nature of Christ.

### + WISDOM GIVEN BY GOD (3:13-18):

- Those who are genuinely wise will display it through their actions.
- The wise work in a spirit of meekness.
- In contrast to the wise, are those whose actions are motivated by selfish ambition and jealousy.
- "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."