



LESSON 8 - JAMES 3:1-12 (STUDENT)

1. What changes did you make as a result of applying last week's lesson?
2. Read James 3:1-12. Summarize this section with one sentence.
3. What is commanded and to whom is it commanded in verse 1?
4. When James makes his original statement, "Let not many of you become teachers," it should cause one to pause and take note of what is being said. It should prompt one to make an evaluation to see if he or she meets the criteria to have such a role among believers. Name 5 situations where someone might be in a position to teach another:

5. Though James doesn't address church leadership directly, Paul tells us that an elder is set apart because he is "one who can teach." What do we learn from Paul about the character of a leader who is recognized as a teacher of Christ's bride (1Timothy 1:3-7; 1Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9)?

6. What does it mean that a teacher will incur a stricter judgment? The believer's judgment of rewards is discussed in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

7. Why is it that not everyone should teach, according to James 3:2?

8. Is it only words that are a problem for James? What does the tongue ultimately reflect according to Jesus in Mark 7:21-23?

9. In verse 2, James says that a person who is not in the habit of stumbling in his or her speech is a "perfect" man. Here the word "perfect" doesn't mean without fault because only Jesus would qualify; it means *mature*.

What is the mature person able to control as well as the tongue?

What kind of **influence** does your tongue have? When your words are out of control, what inevitably follows?

10. Verses 3 and 4 give two examples of small things that are able to control something larger. What are they and how do they accomplish their task. Look it up in a Bible Encyclopedia or online, (www.e-how.com being one such place).

11. If we desire to teach others, including our children, we must pray to the Lord for help in controlling our tongues. What is one circumstance where it is difficult to control your tongue, and with whom?

12. In verses 5-6, what is the potential for **hazard** and **danger** concerning the tongue? Do you remember a time from your childhood when something hurtful was spoken to you? How can you be mindful of the potential danger you hold with your own children? Are there things you have already said for which you need to seek forgiveness?

13. In verses 7-8, the tongue is compared to an _____ animal and is called a _____ evil.

J.B. Phillips said that the word, *restless*, means "always ready to break out," even as an untamed animal would always be ready to "break out" once the door of the cage were cracked open. Do you ever feel your tongue stirring as an untamed animal ready to break out? What thoughts can you preach to yourself after studying this section?

14. In verse 11, what word picture is being compared to a believer's heart? Why is that significant (Jeremiah 2:13; John 7:37-38)?

15. In his epistle, James continues to show us how things are, and how things ought to be. In verses 9-12, what uses of the tongue are **inconsistent** with being a child of God?

16. Why is it so wrong to curse men according to verse 9? Why is that significant?

17. Think about the three natural products listed in verse 12. Imagine what might they say to themselves to remind them of what they are? On the last line write what might you say to yourself to remind you of who **you** are?

I am a _____ and I produce _____.

I am a _____ and I produce _____.

I am an _____ and I produce _____.

I am a _____ and I produce _____.

APPLICATION:

Write a list of all the ways we "bless" God with our mouths.

Write a list of ways we curse God or are tempted to curse God with our lips.

Do you need to make any changes based on the two lists you just produced? What is one way you can consistently bless God more? How will you practically do this? What is one way you can stop cursing God? How will you practically do this?

Words of Evil or Tools for Good?

"It began with a lie in the Garden and it still rages on. The damage can be seen in our offices, kitchens, family rooms, and cars, but the battle isn't really fought there. Battles of the tongue are really battles of the heart. What controls the heart will control the tongue. The tongue can set "the whole course of life on fire," or it can be used to "give grace to the ones who hear." It can viciously tear down or lovingly build up. It can condemn or give life. It can greet sin with love and forgiveness or with hatred and revenge. It can submit to the Lordship of Christ or live under the control of the passions and desires of the sinful nature. It can pursue a lifestyle of ministry or a lifestyle of self-love, manipulating others to meet personal desires and expectations. It can be a fount of truth or a polluted stream of falsehood. It can create peace or cause war. It can curse or it can praise.

"In it all, the tongue will serve the master to which the heart is already committed. It is time for us to submit to the Lord's claim on our tongues as our King and Redeemer. More than ever before, we need to be committed to speak for Him."¹

¹ Paul David Tripp, *War of Words* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2000).