

Bible Study 6 - James 3:1-12

How could James' readers tell if they had real faith? He gave them three marks: controlling the tongue, caring for the needy and avoiding worldliness (1:26-27). In the verses of our study, James begins to elaborate and expand on this matter of controlling the tongue.

1. What is the significance of beginning and ending this section with 'my brothers'? (v.1 & v.12)
2. Why will those who teach be judged with greater strictness?(v.2)
3. Why is the person who does not stumble in what he says called a perfect man? Does he exist? (v.2)
4. In verses 3-5 James uses three examples to explain the power of the tongue, despite its physical smallness. What are the three examples? What is the point James is making?
5. What is meant by the tongue is 'set on fire by hell'? (v.6)
6. Verses 6-12 contain some of the most blistering language in the New Testament, which James directs against the tongue. What phrases does James use in verse 6 to describe the tongue?
7. What is the contrast James draws in verses 7-8? What is James communicating about the tongue?
8. In verses 9-12 James points out a fundamental tension in our use of the tongue. The tongue does two things - blessing and cursing! What three examples does James use in verses 11 & 12 to show the absurdity and sinfulness of using the same tongue to bless God and curse people?
9. Do you think the tongue deserves everything James is ascribing to it here? Does it really cause that much trouble?
10. James has told us that no human being can tame the tongue (v.8). Should we just give up and admit defeat or what can we do to help control our speech?
11. As a result of this study what will you be praying into your life and the lives of the other people in our church family?