

Study Guide #5

Virtual Study of James – James 3:1-18
Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

James 1:2, 19; 2:1, 14; 3:1, 10; 5:7, 12, 19

I. Importance of the Tongue (1-2)

I Tim 1:3-7
I Cor 12:27-31
Matt 18:5-7
Matt 23:8-12

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, *my brothers*, for you know that we who teach will **be judged with greater strictness**. Sin

Why will teacher's be "judged with greater strictness?" What are the dangers that come with being a teacher?

II. Illustrations of the Tongue (3-5)

Three illustrations which demonstrate the power of the tongue

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.

What should be the qualifications of those who teach?
- I Cor 14:1-33
- I Tim 4:13-16
- II Tim 2:22

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

⁴ 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.

How does James' warning about teachers relate to his teaching concerning the tongue?

III. Incurribility of the Tongue (6-8)

What are some things we do with our **tongue** which cause destruction?

⁵ 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! Prov 16:27; 26:18-25

⁶ 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.

Why can the **tongue** not be controlled?

IV. Inconsistency of the Tongue (9-12)

Matt 7:15-20
Matt 12:33-35
Matt 26:33, 69-75
Luke 6:46
I John 4:20-21

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*. Psa 140:3

Gen 1:27

⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the *likeness of God*.

Illustrations from Nature

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.

V. Instructions for the Tongue (13-18)

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct **let him show his works** in the meekness of wisdom.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, **do not boast and be false to the truth**.

Connects James' teaching on Wisdom to the Tongue

¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and **good fruits**, impartial and sincere.

¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

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Questions for Discussion

The Control of the Tongue (vv. 1-12; 1:19, 26)

Why does James say, “Not many of you should become teachers?” What things should be present before someone becomes a teacher of the gospel? (vv. 1-2; 1 Timothy 1:3-7)

Why will teachers be judged with a greater strictness?

How can our **tongue** be both an essential instrument and a major obstacle in teaching? What are some difficulties that the **tongue** can cause?

How does our ability to control our **tongue** relate to our ability to control the rest of our body? What two examples does he use to illustrate this idea? (vv. 2-4)

Even though our **tongue** is a small part of the body, what specific thing does James say that it is capable of? (v. 5)

What are some specific ways in which our **tongue** can be an influence for evil?

What imagery does James use to show the destructive influence of the **tongue**? (vv. 5-6)

Why is the **tongue** called a restless evil, full of deadly poison?

What are some specific things we can do with our **tongue** which cause destruction to ourselves and to others?

In what ways are we inconsistent with our use of the **tongue**?

What examples from nature does he use to illustrate this idea?

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Two Kinds of Wisdom (vv. 13-18)

How is the wise and understanding person to manifest himself? (v. 13)

What characterizes wisdom that does not descend from above? (v. 14)

What is the source of such wisdom? (v. 15)

What exists when there is envy and self-seeking? (v. 16)

What are the qualities of wisdom that is from above? (v. 17)

Who produces the fruit of righteousness? (v. 18)

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“My Brothers”

James 1:2 (ESV)

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

James 1:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;

James 2:1 (ESV)

¹ My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

James 2:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

James 3:1 (ESV)

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

James 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

James 5:7 (ESV)

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

James 5:12 (ESV)

¹² But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

James 5:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,

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Teachers

1 Timothy 1:3-7 (ESV)

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 (ESV)

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Matthew 18:5-7 (ESV)

⁵ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷ “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!

Matthew 23:8-12 (ESV)

⁸ But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰ Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹ The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Qualifications of Teachers

1 Corinthians 14:1-40 (ESV)

¹ Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone

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interprets, so that the church may be built up. ⁶ Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷ If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸ And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, ¹¹ but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. ¹² So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. ¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” ²² Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. ²⁶ What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷ If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴ the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. ³⁵ If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶ Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? ³⁷ If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. ³⁸ If anyone does not recognize this, he is

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not recognized. ³⁹ So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But all things should be done decently and in order.

1 Timothy 4:12-16 (ESV)

¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

2 Timothy 2:22 (ESV)

²² So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Tongue is Fire

Proverbs 16:27 (ESV)

²⁷ A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.

Proverbs 26:18-25 (ESV)

¹⁸ Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death ¹⁹ is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!" ²⁰ For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. ²¹ As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. ²² The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body. ²³ Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are fervent lips with an evil heart. ²⁴ Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart; ²⁵ when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart;

Deadly Poison

Psalms 140:3 (ESV)

³ They make their tongue sharp as a serpent's, and under their lips is the venom of asps. Selah

Likeness of God

Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

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Inconsistency

Matthew 7:15-20 (ESV)

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Matthew 12:33-35 (ESV)

³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

Matthew 26:33-35 (ESV)

³³ Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” ³⁴ Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” ³⁵ Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.

Matthew 26:69-75 (ESV)

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.” ⁷¹ And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Luke 6:46 (ESV)

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

1 John 4:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.