

The BOOK of JAMES

WHAT VIBRANT *faith* LOOKS LIKE

Key Scriptures

James 3

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Speech

James 3:1-12 talks about the importance of taming our tongues. We tend to minimize how negative words affect us and others, but words have more power than we know. As we walk out our faith journey, it's critical for us to recognize three specific truths about our words: They will determine the direction of our lives; they have the power to destroy what we have; and they will always reveal what's in our hearts.

Think about it.

The three main points from last weekend's sermon:

- **We need to allow God to change our hearts.** When we surrender our hearts and lives to God, He will empower us to change our words.
- **We need to put a filter on what we allow in our hearts.** Jesus said our words come out of the overflow of our hearts. When we make healthy choices regarding what we watch, listen to, and participate in, we will have healthy hearts and be able to speak in a way that pleases God.
- **We need to decide to speak words of life.** We can bless others by speaking words of affection, praise, encouragement, healing, and faith over them.

Share your insight.

1. Share a personal example of how someone's words have shaped your life in a positive or negative way.
2. What are your current filters for what you watch and listen to? What changes do you need to make to assure you only allow healthy things into your heart?
3. What are some practical ways you can speak words of life over others this week? Who in your life most needs to hear life-giving words?

Pray for one another.

- "WE SHAPE OUR WORDS, AND THEN OUR WORDS SHAPE US."
- Ask God to help you identify vocabularies you often use that don't bring life.
- Ask Him to help you develop the wisdom how to rebuke without tearing down.
- Pray this corporately:
God, thank You for helping us understand the power of our words. We want to speak words that align with Your will for our lives and bring life to others. We surrender our lives to You today and pray that the thoughts and feelings of our hearts, and the words in our mouths, will please You, Lord.