



Leader

9/20 - James 3:1-12

LOVE

A new commandment I give to you, that you love *one another*... (John 13:34)

- *Internal*: How was your week? Any new life updates? How was your walk with the Lord this week?
- *External*: Practically, is there any individual or family that needs encouragement from us as a group?

TRUTH

Let the word of God dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing *one another*... (Col. 3:16)

1. When you reflect on the message from Sunday, what most resonated with you?

[Open Discussion]

2. Let's read our primary text. In these opening verses of chapter 3, James warns that "not many of you should become teachers." Why do you think James includes this in this context?

Teachers exercise unusual influence over others' beliefs and lives through their words, so James warns that they "will be judged with greater strictness." It's not a blanket discouragement from teaching but a sober caution: the position carries heightened accountability before God precisely because speech is the teacher's primary tool, and speech is so hard to control rightly.

3. What do the bit and the rudder illustrations have in common, and what point do they make about the tongue? What other illustrations like this come to mind?

Both a small bit in a horse's mouth and a small rudder on a large ship exert control wholly out of proportion to their size. A tiny instrument steers an entire large, powerful body wherever the one holding it wills. The illustrations set up the tongue by analogy: something disproportionately small compared to the whole person nonetheless directs the whole course of that person's life. [example: stubbing your pinky toe...affects the whole body]

4. What is the point of James contrasting wild animals with the "untamability" of the tongue?

James notes that humanity has tamed every category of creature; beasts, birds, reptiles, sea creatures...an impressive display of human dominion (echoing Genesis 1). Yet "no human being can tame the tongue." The contrast is deliberately shocking: people can subdue wild animals but not their own speech, exposing the tongue as a uniquely stubborn, humanly unconquerable problem.

5. Why do James bring up the likeness of God in verse 9? Why is this important?

By invoking the image of God (echoing Genesis 1:26-27), James roots the wrongness of cursing others in theology, not just etiquette. To curse a person made in God's likeness is, in effect, an assault on something that bears God's own image. It reframes unkind or cursing speech as a spiritual offense against God himself, not merely a social lapse.

6. How does James' closing illustrations cement his points for his audience?

Each picture makes the same claim: nature doesn't produce contradictory results from a single source. A spring doesn't yield both fresh and salt water, a fig tree can't bear olives, a grapevine can't produce figs, and a salt pond can't yield fresh water. James's underlying point is that blessing

and cursing flowing from the same mouth is just as unnatural and shouldn't be normal for someone with a transformed heart. What comes out of the mouth reveals what is really within, and it should be consistent, because a good source produces good fruit.

7. Where this week have you observed "blessing and cursing" coming from the same mouth?

[Open Discussion]

8. In your own estimation, do you think you speak more life or death over people (or even your family) with your tongue? What are some initial steps to getting this under control?

[Open Discussion] - Are you surrounding yourself with people who are loose with their tongue? Do you consume music/media/entertainment that contains poor language? Is your social media filled with people who have negative speech? All of these things poison your heart, therefore poisoning your speech, and finally your words poison others.

9. Any other thoughts you would like to share before we wrap up this text?

[Open Discussion]

GREAT COMMISSION

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... (Matt. 28:19-20)

- *Internal*: Did you make time to disciple your family this week? Pray with them?
- *External*: Is your life marked by joy/contentment? Are you prepared to share the gospel if the Holy Spirit prompted? Is the name of Jesus on your lips in your day-to-day activity?

CONFESSION/PRAYER/REPENTANCE

But exhort *one another* every day, as long as it is called "today,"... (Heb. 3:12-14)

- Confession is agreeing with God about our sin according to the Scriptures. Is there anything you want to confess before the group (generally)? [*apathy, idolatry, selfishness, jealousy, anger, envy*]
- Let's pray, asking God to help us apply His word to our lives.

Sources:

- ESV Study Bible Commentary
- GotQuestions.org
- Multiple AI Resources