

## **Week 6 – James 3:1-18 Taming the Tongue**

### **1. The Trouble with the Tongue (3:1-12)**

- What does James think would be the hardest area of life in which to avoid stumbling?
- Look in verses 3-5 James uses three examples to explain the power of the tongue, despite its physical smallness. What are the three examples? Explain James' point in your own words.
- 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's evil? Write out each phrase in the verse, and explain what each means. (Use the note on 3:5–6 in the ESV Study Bible for help.)
- What is the contrast James draws in verses 7–8? What is James communicating about the tongue?
- In verses 9–12 James points out a fundamental tension in our use of the tongue. The tongue does two things at once—blessing and cursing! What three examples does James use in verses 11 and 12 to show the absurdity and sinfulness of using the same tongue to bless God and curse people?
- Do you think the tongue deserves everything James is ascribing to it here? Does it really cause that much trouble? Why do you give that answer?

### **2. The Solution: Wisdom from Above (3:13-18)**

- If the tongue is so dangerous, what should we do about it? James has already said in 1:26 that obedience to the word of God requires us to bridle the tongue. His point seems to be similar here. Instead of being driven by the evil of the tongue, we should be marked by “the meekness of wisdom.” Can you find places in 3:1–12 that show how the tongue can be marked by pride instead of meekness?
- Explain how a church full of jealousy and selfish ambition can collapse into disorder and vileness (v. 16).
- Read verses 17–18 and notice all the words James uses to describe a person marked by wisdom from above. How are those things opposed to bitter jealousy and selfish ambition?