

The General Epistle of James

Faith
that works!

3

OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Psalm 12**. The unbelieving mouth boastful words. They extol themselves, and they openly rebel against their Lord and Maker. Lord, guard us from such empty speech! Guard our lips and our tongues, and overturn the wicked!

INTRODUCTION

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but word can never hurt me!” Children learn that phrase to fend off teasing and bullying from their peers.

The reality, however, is that words *do* hurt! They hurt on the inside, where the injury cannot be seen. How much damage has been done with mere words!

James warns us to guard our speech, so that the words that flow from our lips may honor God and edify our neighbor.

WISDOM ON THE TONGUE

Read James 3:1-12

Does James 3:1 discourage people from aspiring to the ministry of preaching and teaching? What is James addressing here?

Why do teachers receive more judgment?

In verses 3-6 James speaks of the power of the tongue. What kind of speech is addressed here?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-4. What kind of speech is James *not* addressing as hurtful here?

Give examples of how the tongue lights the world on fire:

Consider the hypocrisy James describes in verses 9-12. How are you guilty of doing what James describes here?

Read James 3:13-18.

How does your life stack up against James' admonition here? (See also **1 John 2:15-17.**)

What do you aspire to in your life? Or in other words, toward what is your ambition directed?

For discussion: Can a person who has the demeanor and life described in verses 17 and 18 be successful in this life? Explain your answer.

SUBMISSION

Read James 4:1-12

The word “submit” is practically a dirty word in our society. Why is this word such a tough one to swallow?

The sin of covetousness (Commandments 9 and 10) may not get as much attention as other transgressions against God’s law. Give at least three reasons from James why covetousness is a very serious sin:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Examine your own heart and life. How are you given to the sin of covetousness? What is the solution?

According to verse 3, why do so many prayers go unanswered?

Describe how verse 4 applies practically to you in your dealing with the world.

For discussion: God says that he is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5). Use James 4:5 to help understand what this means and how it applies to your existence in the following areas, as a starting point: Your career, your worship life, your devotional life, dating and marriage, purchasing decisions, etc.

Verses 7 through 12 refer to repentance. Consider:

What place does repentance have in the life of a Christian?

How do repentance, humility and the emotions outlined here (grieving, mourning and wailing) fit together with other Christian concepts like joy and celebration?

VERSES TO REMEMBER

James 3:1 *Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

James 4:4 *Don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?*

For next time, read James chapters 4 and 5