

Faith ALIVE!

A study in the Book of James Lesson Five

**Gold River Calvary Chapel
Women's Bible Fellowship**

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A Study in the Book of JAMES

Gold River Calvary Chapel Women's Ministry

Lesson Five

James 3:1-18

Summary: *This week we will learn how controlling our speech shows Godly wisdom.*

Step One: Read the Word

"In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:3 (CSB)

This study uses the English Standard Version Bible translation (ESV), which is provided for you in each lesson in Step One. Please use that version to fill in blanks or answer questions, but you are encouraged to read as many translations as you like in order to get a fuller understanding of the scripture.

In Step One, try to determine the "who, what, where, when or how" of the passage. Look for words that are repeated often, and circle any key words and underline phrases that stick out to you. Use the column to the right to jot down any notes, scripture references, or questions you might have.

Remember to always pray before you read God's Word, asking the Holy Spirit to open the scripture to your understanding.

Complete Step One by reading and marking up James Chapter 3, below, and answering the questions that follow.

James 3

English Standard Version

Taming the Tongue

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 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. 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. 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! 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. 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. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 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.

Wisdom from Above

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. 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.

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| <p>¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.</p> <p>¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.</p> | |
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Step 1 Questions:

1. What does James think causes believers to stumble the most? (Verse 2)
2. What examples does James use to show the power of the tongue regardless of its smallness? (Verses 3-8)
3. What examples does James use to show how the tongue is used at the same time to bless and curse those made in God's image? (Verses 9-12)
4. What three things characterize earthly wisdom? (Verse 15)
5. What eight things characterize godly wisdom? (Verse 17)

Step 2: Consider the Word

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...” Colossians 3:16 (CSB)

Re-read James Chapter 3 and answer the questions below. (Remember to use the English Standard Version (ESV) translation provided in Step One to answer).

1. In the first twelve verses James reminds believers that their speech is an indicator of how their faith is lived out.

(a) See verse 1. Why did James warn believers not to seek to be teachers of God’s word? (See Luke 12:48b to help with your answer)

(b) Romans 12:6-7 and 1 Corinthians 12:28 describe the teaching of God’s word as a spiritual gift. What do you think is the difference between seeking to be a teacher of God’s word and being called and gifted to be a teacher of God’s word?

(c) Read 2 Timothy 2:15. What is the responsibility of those who teach the Bible?

(d) Why is it important to attend a church where pastors and teachers take seriously and prayerfully this responsibility?

2. James uses several analogies in the first twelve verses to express the damage that can be done by what we say.
 - (a) In what ways can our speech be like a consuming fire?
 - (b) In what ways can our speech effect the whole course of our lives?
 - (c) In what ways is it a “deadly poison” that can it harm ourself and others?
 - (d) By contrast, what effect should our speech have on others? (See Ephesians 4:29)
 - (e) What does Jesus say is the root problem with our tongues in Luke 6:45?
3. Read Psalm 141:3 and Proverbs 21:23. What do these verses tell us about God’s help and our responsibility in controlling the tongue?

4. In verse 2, James says that we all stumble in many ways, but if we can control our tongues, we will be “perfect.” The word for “perfect” in the Greek means that we will be mature and complete. It is the same word he uses in James 1:4, when he says that our faith is tested so that we will become mature and complete in our faith.

How would controlling our tongues keep us from stumbling and mature us in our Christian walk?

5. As James points to godly wisdom for the answer to enduring the testing of our faith in James 1:5, so again he points to godly wisdom as the answer to controlling our tongues in James 3:13.

(a) See verse 13. Why do you think James connects wisdom and understanding with good conduct? (See Proverbs 2:1-7 for help.) Is our speech part of our conduct?

(b) James also says in verse 13 that such good works should be shown in the “meekness of wisdom.” The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “meekness” as “a mild, moderate, humble or submissive quality.” Some other bible translations use the words “gentleness” or “humility” instead of meekness.

Why do you think James says that meekness is a necessary part of wisdom?

Who is our model for the meekness of wisdom? (See Matthew 11:29)

6. In verses 14-16, James warns against having bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in our hearts.

(a) How do these heart attitudes differ from meekness?

(b) How are they false to the truth?

(c) What is the result of these heart attitudes? (Verse 16)

7. (a) In contrast to earthly wisdom, what is the result of godly wisdom? (Verse 18)

(b) How does this relate to verse 13?

(c) What does Jesus say about those who live out this kind of wisdom in Matthew 5:9?

Memory Verse: “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.” (James 3:17)

Write the memory verse down below:

Step 3: Walk in the Word

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...” Philipplians 1:27 (ESV)

Re-read James Chapter 3 and answer the questions below

1. What situations cause you to stumble most in your speech? What steps can you take to “put a bridle” on your tongue in these situations? How would prayer be especially helpful to you?

2. Think of a situation where your words were used by God to build someone up and edify him or her and write it below. How was humility on your part a key component of your ability to do that?

3. In what areas of your life do you especially need heavenly wisdom today? What encouragement do you get from the assurance of James 1:5?

Write the memory verse below:

**Memory Verse: “But the _____ from above is first _____,
then _____, gentle, open to reason, full of _____ and good
_____, impartial and _____.” (James 3:17)**

What lesson or truth meant the most to you this week?

Journal a prayer below, thanking God for that truth.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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