

Small Group Study Guide



November 11, 2018

“Taming our Tongues”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you spoke this world into existence with the power of your words. And we thank you for giving us the ability to communicate with our words. But too often, we use our words to hurt others instead of blessing them. So would you help us to guard the destructive nature of our tongues? Father, remind us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

James 3:2-12 Common English Bible (CEB)

2 We all make mistakes often, but those who don't make mistakes with their words have reached full maturity. Like a bridled horse, they can control themselves entirely. 3 When we bridle horses and put bits in their mouths to lead them wherever we want, we can control their whole bodies. 4 Consider ships: They are so large that strong winds are needed to drive them. But pilots direct their ships wherever they want with a little rudder. 5 In the same way, even though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts wildly. Think about this: A small flame can set a whole forest on fire. 6 The tongue is a small flame of fire, a world of evil at work in us. It contaminates our entire lives. Because of it, the circle of life is set on fire. The tongue itself is set on fire by the flames of hell. 7 People can tame and already have tamed every kind of animal, bird, reptile, and fish. 8 No one can tame the tongue, though. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we both bless the Lord and Father and curse human beings made in God's likeness. 10 Blessing and cursing come from the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it just shouldn't be this way! 11 Both fresh water and salt water don't come from the same spring, do they? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree produce olives? Can a grapevine produce figs? Of course not, and fresh water doesn't flow from a saltwater spring either.



INTRODUCTION

Like a small spark that has the potential to scorch an entire green forest, our tongues are untamable with the power to control our whole bodies. We have a tool that can be used to build up those around us or tear them down with just a few words. What do we do with that kind of power? We can't lock it away. But we can, by God's grace, learn to control it.

We are powerful because our words are powerful. Our mouths have more destructive power than any other part of our body. The good news is that we also have the power to avoid the consequences of an untamable tongue if we choose to take James' wisdom to heart and surrender this powerful tool to God.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Think of an example of someone who famously lost control of their mouth? What's your perception of that person? What consequences do you assume they faced?
- 2) Who has significantly impacted your life with their words in a positive way?
- 3) In which relationships do you find yourself losing control of your mouth? Have you faced any relational consequences as a result?
- 4) Do you think it's easier to remember the harsh words of those who hurt you or the kind words of those that encourage you?
- 5) It's hard to come to grips with how powerful our words can be. It helps to have a clear plan on how to respond when you're faced with losing control. In which of the following areas below do you need the most help.
 - **Remember** – recognize that your words are powerful.
 - **Surrender** – ask God to help you be quick to listen and slow to speak.
 - **Confess** – don't explain or excuse, own the fires you start.

FINAL APPLICATION

Take time this week to pray *“Heavenly Father, remind me to be quick to listen and slow to speak.”*