

Small-Group Material: James 3

The Power of Words

Welcome 10 mins

Opening exercise: Think back to a time when someone said something to you that stuck with you for a long period. Try to think of

1. An example of something which was a strong encouragement
2. An example of something which hurt you.

How have these words affected you over time?

Leader to now introduce the theme on the power of words. In this study, you will be looking at how the words that one verbalises and thinks, affect our whole spiritual being and those around us. James challenges us with the polarized outcome that our tongue can be life-giving but can also lead us into evil ways and desires if we do not have mastery over it.

Worship (10/15 mins)

Meditate on Psalm 19 together taking a verse each to read. Feel free to be led into prayers of thanksgiving and praise. If you have time and would like to, sing or listen to 'may the words of my mouth' by Tim Hughes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsfZKZC-rKs> (words on next page)

Word (35 mins) James 3:1-12

Begin by asking someone to read the passage

1. Consider verse 2. What is the link that James is trying to make between what we say and our imperfection, or what some might refer to as a 'fallen state'?

2. How do the illustrations in verses 3-5 about the horse and the ship help us to understand the power of the tongue and its ability to control our whole bodies?
3. Look at verses 5 and 6. James writes very strongly about the power of the tongue to harm. Why and how does what we say have such power to corrupt ourselves?
4. Despite even our best efforts to control our tongue, James says in verse 7 and 8 that our tongues are untamable. In what ways have you experienced this, and what things can we do to manage the challenge of self-control?
5. Finally ponder verses 9- 12. Two parts:

-In what ways do these verses suggest that we can easily become hypocrites? (Are you guilty of this?)

-What is the key link between what we say to others and our worship to God?

Witness (20 mins)

A. Spend a moment of quiet reflecting on the discussion. Think back to your responses in the opening exercise. Then follows a two-part response:

1. Take a pen/pencil and paper and jot down ways that your tongue can get the worst of yourself and others.
2. Identify particular times and places in the days and weeks ahead, where you can be more intentional about what you say to others, in particular how you can encourage and build others up.

B. Check out the recent 'St Mary's Matters' (14th Feb) and pray together for the different things highlighted.

Song Words

Verse 1

May the words of my mouth
And the thoughts of my heart
Bless Your name
Bless Your name Jesus
And the deeds of the day
And the truth in my way
Speak of You speak of You Jesus

Chorus

*For this is what I'm glad to do
It's time to live a life of love that pleases You
And I will give my all to You
Surrender everything I have and follow You
I'll follow You*

Verse 2

Lord will You be my vision
Lord will You be my Guide

Be my hope be my life and the Way
And I'll look not for riches
Nor praises on the earth
Only You'll be the first of my heart

Bridge

I will follow
I will follow You
I will follow
I will follow You
(REPEAT)