

James 3 The Tongue Is a Fire

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. 4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.

9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Wisdom from Above

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 1

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character

Paul's observations and insights

1. Why does James discourage us from becoming a teacher of God's word?
2. Jesus said 'the wrong teaching is a snare of imprisonment, which binds the

captive.

3. What does James mean by 'a stricter judgement upon false teachers'?
4. Is it true that everyone of us stumbles?
5. What does it mean to be perfect?
6. Why is it necessary to bridle the tongue to take control of our bodies?
7. The controlling of the tongue is like the controlling of a horse - it is essential if you want to go the right way.
8. The ship also has its own steering mechanism to direct it to the place it is going.
9. Language and the use of the tongue enable communication; it is a gift from God.
10. God used the confusion of the tongue, to limit man's ability, to do whatever he wished.
11. Why does James equate the tongue to be like a fire?
12. Is it true that no one can contain the tongue?
13. Words are the most powerful thing in the universe, because they are creative for destruction and for life.
14. What does it mean, 'to bless the Lord'?
15. What does it mean 'to curse your fellow man'?
16. Why is it wrong to say what you think even if it hurts someone else?
17. Have you ever tasted bitter water?
18. God has taken what was manifesting evil and inappropriate, as a non-Christian, and transformed it to manifest what is good and appropriate.
19. When a person considers himself as being wise, what are they saying about themselves?
20. Is there a difference between wisdom and understanding?
21. What happens to a person when they become bitter, jealous and full of themselves?
22. Is it wrong to have ambition in your heart?
23. If we live with jealousy what will happen to us?
24. What happens when we live in disorder?
25. Why is God's wisdom different for man's wisdom?
26. What is it to be, 'pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, merciful and unwavering without hypocrisy'?
27. How does a person grow in righteousness?
28. Words are seeds of life waiting to be sown.
29. Words are only sown when they are said, heard and received in the heart?
30. Your heart is your spirit?
31. Why is it important for Christians to be peacemakers and not provocateurs of trouble?