

James 3.1–12

“Pure Speech”

The following is a list of possible questions, ideas, topics, pitfalls, and/or the “crux” of the next Growth Group study session. I will generate these for you weekly. Use what you wish. These are simply ideas for **you**, the Growth Group Leader, to foment discussions within your group, and teach practical living based on the Word of God.

Scripture ref's:

James 4.10

James 1.19

1Cor 12.28

Acts 13.1

Romans 12.7;

Eph. 4.11

Proverbs

10.8, 11;

12.13;

13.3;

16.27–28;

18.7–8

Psalms

64.8;

140.9

Ecclesiastes

10.12

Deut 11.26;

30.19

Matt 28.20

John 15.26

Pure speech is a product of a pure heart.

James focuses now on dissensions and disputes within the community. Impure, especially critical speech almost always accompanies quarrels, argument, gossip and love-less disagreement. (The cure for this will be underscored by James in verse 4:10.)

He returns to a previous warning.

In James 1.19, we are warned to be slow to speak—for our own good, and the protection of others. “*Words are works.*” In keeping with his lecture on a *real* saving faith resulting in good works, James reminds us that our words—in a very familiar way—are also our works.

Don't be a teacher: Growth Group Leader warning!

Paul singled-out Teachers as one of the three most prominent positions in the Church [along with Apostles and Prophets (1Cor 12.28; Acts 13.1; Romans 12.7; Eph. 4.11)]. Yet here, James warns against many becoming teachers—and with a stern warning. Flocking to worthy profession with the wrong intentions is to be avoided. Teachers may set themselves up for greater judgement and wrath based on the possible overuse of our *naturally nasty utensil: the tongue* (say that three times fast!) If the teacher is to be so warned, then the students are to be particularly attuned. After all, if the teacher (who supposedly knows so much more) is in peril of failing, then what becomes of the poor student? Many sin in different ways, on but this point we all stumble. Sins of the terrible tongue affect us all.

It's an old story.

Apparently this is an old problem, as the book of Proverbs tackled it with regularity: 10.8, 11; 12.13; 13.3; 16.27–28; 18.7–8; So did the authors of Psalms: 64.8; 140.9, and Ecclesiastes: 10.12.

But how can such a tiny thing hold such power?

Note the comparisons of small-to-large, tongue-to-damage: bit:horse; rudder:ships and winds; tiny spark or flame: huge forest fire. So is the tongue is to great damage in the Body of Christ—His people.

Blessing or Curse?

It's a choice offered often in the Bible, “Blessing or Curse?” (See Deut 11.26; and 30.19, for example.) What one says flows from the actual state of one's heart.

Last week's message encouraged us to *invest* upward—in God—so that our hearts would become pure. And, then from the *overflow* of our hearts we would treat our brothers and sisters with pure works (in this case words) in an *inviting* way. Invest in God (the vertical beam), be inviting to others (the horizontal beam). It's the picture of the Cross. It comes from HIS power, HIS gifts. Invest in Jesus. Good works/words will flow. “Seek ye first...”.

James wasn't perfect.

Notice James includes himself in the warning. Count the “We” pronouns in James 3.1–12. James understands the temptation and the destructive power of the tongue. The Apostles, like the other heroes of the Bible were not perfect (in fact—far from it!), but God used the weakness of man for His own glory and for His story. It's about Him. And He will grow you, and love you, and help you. We don't have to pray that Jesus will be with us and help us. He has already made those promises. On on those, you can rest assured. (Matt 28.20; John 15.26.)

