A Faith that Works

# Words Matter

James 3:1-12

**Overview**

This is one of the most straightforward sections—and one of the most universally indicting—in the book of James. If there’s anything we have learned about James so far, it’s that he has a strong distaste for worthless religion. To James, talk is cheap—and yet, our words matter more than we realize. How we talk to others and about others is a critical indicator of our overall spiritual health and maturity.

**Notes**

*Two Warnings about the Tongue (vv. 1-2)*

1. Warning for Teachers (v. 1)
2. Stumbling and Maturity (v. 2)

*Five Truths about the Tongue (vv. 3-12)*

Our tongues are…

1. Powerful (vv. 3-5)
2. Destructive (vv. 5-6)
3. Untamed (vv. 7-8)
4. Contradictory (vv. 9-10)
5. Revealing (vv. 11-12)

**Reflection Questions**

1. Why do words matter? What makes our words so important?
2. How have you experienced (yourself) or witnessed (in those around you) the power of the tongue to bless or to curse?
3. James describes our tongues as powerful, destructive, untamed, contradictory, and revealing. Which of these characteristics do you particularly need to remember right now?
4. When you reflect on how you speak to or about others, what does your tongue reveal about your heart?
5. Is there a way you have used your tongue recently that you need to confess and seek someone’s forgiveness for?
6. In what practical ways do you most need God’s wisdom and help to bridle your tongue?

**Prayer Prompts**

1. Thank God for the gift of speech and the ability to communicate.
2. Confess to God the ways you have used your tongue to curse others: to cut down, compare, condemn, or complain.
3. Ask God to grow in you his heart of love toward others that can pour forth refreshing words instead of bitter words.
4. Ask God for the wisdom to bridle your tongue and speak words of grace and truth.