

THE BOOK OF JAMES

FATHWORKS



James 3:1-12

The Steering of Our Lives

'Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. '

James 3:1-12, NIV

It is fascinating how something so small can have such a tremendous effect. The tongue and the words we speak are an incredible guide for how we put on the full display of the Gospel in our lives. The way we address people, things, and discuss our situations can guide and steer our whole outlook and worldview. Even worse, it can reveal the treasonous nature inside of ourselves. The same mouth that produces praise for God also produces the same foul hatred and despair for others and the world around us. Clearly, the tongue, with its great potential to speak life also carries with it an undeniable temptation to tear down.

How would you explain the analogy that James uses of the bit in the horse's mouth? The rudder steering a ship? What things is James trying to symbolize through this comparison?

What are some of the positive effects of speech? When have you been positively impacted by the speech of someone else?

In what way does the tongue corrupt the whole body? What are some of the problematic types of speech that are frequently an issue? In our culture today, where do you see instances of problematic speech?

Why do you think God cares what we say? What is the potential impact it can have on others? What is the potential impact it can have on our own souls and well-being?

What is "Godly speech" and why is it so important to express? How do we express Godly speech in the difficult times?

Sometimes issues are not so black and white as to when we should speak up and when we should refrain from speaking. What is the difference between these two times? How do we know which is which?

We all are guilty of being inconsistent with our speech and each of us has at times. Taking an honest look at what you say, would you say that your words are producing salt water or fresh water?

How can God redeem our speech? What are some of the things we can do to encourage one another in our speech and live out the faith we have?

Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day One	James 3:1-12
Day Two	Psalm 8
Day Three	Exodus 8
Day Four	John 9
Day Five	Romans 9
Day Six	Psalm 9
Day Seven	Exodus 9

Prayer Requests