



## STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, June 29, 2025

**Teaching Title:** The Real Threat

**Key Scripture:** James 3:1–12

# CEDAR VALLEY

### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** James 1

**Tuesday:** James 2

**Wednesday:** James 3

**Thursday:** James 4

**Friday:** James 5

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

### MEMORY TOPIC:

The Heart

### MEMORY VERSE:

Psalms 19:14 NLT

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to You, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### Introduction:

The greatest danger facing the Church today is not what is happening outside of it, but the internal issues—specifically, the condition of our hearts and the power of our words. In James 3:1–12, James vividly illustrates how the tongue—what we say, write, and post—can either direct people toward good or cause widespread destruction. But the danger of the tongue is merely a symptom of a deeper issue: a heart that is not right with God. Our words reveal what is in our hearts, and if our hearts are filled with bitterness, pride, or selfishness, that is what will come out of our mouths. If we want to see change in the Church and in the world, it must begin with transformed hearts. This means pursuing time in God's Word, in community, in prayer, and fully surrendering to Christ. You tame your tongue by turning your heart.

#### Questions:

Icebreaker: True or False: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Explain your answer.

1. Read James 3:1–12 together as a group (also re-read James 1:19). Why do you think James wrote this passage? What problem was he was trying to address?
2. Why do you think teachers will be judged with greater strictness? (See Digging Deeper)
3. How does mastering one's speech help keep the whole body in check?
4. List all the metaphors or illustrations James uses in 3:1–12 to explain the importance of controlling our tongue. Which metaphor stands out to you the most? (See Notes)
5. James 3:8 says that no one can tame the tongue. What do you think he means by this? What part do we play in controlling our speech, and what role does God play?

6. What is the contradiction found in James 3:9–10? Where does the root of our problem with evil speech lie? (See Matthew 15:11, 18–19)
7. What are two practical things you can do this week to gain better control of your tongue?

## NOTES

Question 4—

The Greek word for “bit” literally means “to lead”. So, he’s saying even though the bit in the mouth of a horse is small, that bit is what leads and directs the horse.

James is saying your tongue is like that. It’s small, but it’s powerful. It can totally steer your life.

You can use your words to encourage someone or discourage them. You can build them up or tear them down. Your words are powerful!

## DIGGING DEEPER

Question 2—

James 3:2 | “The teacher places himself in greater danger of judgment because the main tool of his ministry is also the part of the body most difficult to control: the tongue. To highlight the peculiar danger of the tongue, James first acknowledges the prevalence of sin: *we all make many mistakes*. The verb James use (*ptaio*) means ‘to stumble’ and is applied figurately to spiritual failure both in Judaism and the New Testament. It may suggest sins of a relatively minor, even inadvertent nature. The emphasis is probably not on the number of sins (as the RSV may suggest), but on the variety of sins (‘we all stumble in many ways’ NIV). In contrast to this, James says, is the one way in which we all sin – with the tongue. James is not the first to single out impure speech as particularly widespread sin. Proverbs, for instance, has a great deal to say about the importance of and power of words (cf. 10:8, 11; 16:27-28; 18:7-8) ... So difficult is the mouth to control, so given is it to utter the false, the biting, the slanderous word, so prone to stay open when it were more profitably closed, that the person who has in control surely has the ability to conquer other, less unruly, member of the body. Since James continues to include himself in his strictures (‘we all make many mistakes’) he may also be continuing to think specifically of teachers in this verse. But the rest of the passage makes no reference to teachers, and James’ warning about the tongue certainly has general application. Probably, then, James intends to include all his readers in the first-person plural of verse 2. His warning to would-be teachers has suggested to his mind the problem of the tongue; and this is a problem for everyone in the church.”

—Douglas J. Moo. *The Tyndale New Testament Commentary: James*. IVP: Grand Rapids, 1985. Pgs. 120-121