



BE MEEK, NOT WEAK.

JAMES 3:1-12

James Chapter 3

LETTER
OUTLINE

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CHAPTER
OUTLINE

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CULTIVATE OR CURSE, PICK ONE. 3:9-12

Where we're going with it:

In this first half of James 3, he reminds us of the great **capacity** that the tongue has in the Christian and by our example (+/-) the non-Christian's world. He encourages us to be aware of this, on our guard and real with ourselves as to what our words give away about our faith. Speaking to application, while we can't tame our tongue perfectly, we can **control** it, **cage** it and **cultivate** it. (...also **Meekness** can be understood as strength under control).

Things to chew on...

1. Can you think of a time your words or another's changed the course of events? Maybe started a fire that grew way bigger than you ever expected?
2. Have you ever seen a dispute within the church, school, community or family that was handled wisely, clearly and kindly? How did it happen?
3. Of the comparisons James offers for the tongue, which one(s) suggest that words can be constructive? destructive? neutral?
4. What does text reveal that James is trying to say with these comparisons, like the general principle beneath it all (*hint: verse 5a [or first half]*)?
4. James says that no one can "tame the tongue," (vv. 7-8) if it is impossible why should we bother with this chapter?
6. What might be a real life example of vv. 9-10 in your own life?
7. How do you figure this section continues to support James's over-all argument that faith without works isn't genuine faith?

(Some ideas for application and connecting scriptures on the back.)

Possible applications...

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Memorization/Meditation: Learn James 3:9-10. This isn't your normal type of memory verse, but it might prove helpful in real-life situations.

Stop-Phrase: When you find yourself speaking badly about someone, stop—in mid-sentence if you need to. Find a phrase to run through your mind in those cases. Maybe it's James 3:9-10. Maybe it's just "This should not be." Or maybe it's a more positive statement like "Bless the Lord, O my soul" or the prayer from Psalm 19:14. What will your phrase be?

Encouragement: Think of three people you can encourage this week. Can you bolster their confidence or their faith? Write their names down on paper or your wrist, or tell a friend who they are.

Thanks: Who has encouraged you in the past? Who has spoken words into your life that truly helped you? Can you find them and thank them for that?

Media Fast: Many of us learn unkind habits of communication from the media all around us (screens, print and headphones). If this is a problem for you, engage in a "fast," abstaining from those media sources for a period of time—perhaps the next seven days. Then re-evaluate.

Connecting Scriptures...

15 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom. (Proverbs 10:19-21)

Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad. (Proverbs 12:25)

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. 35 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:34-37)

A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it! It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell. This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue—it's never been done. (James 3:5-8, The Message Translation)

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