

James 3:9-10 NLT - 9 Sometimes it [the tongue] praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!

Matthew 5:43-45 NLT - 43 "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! 45 In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.

There is only one way to love your enemy and that is to change your heart. Don't allow the enemy to convince you it is ok to hate those who you disagree with. Pray a prayer of surrender to God, asking Him to replace your heart with His so that God's love can flow from your words.

WRAP-UP

Our words are powerful, but our tongues are uncontrollable without the power of the Holy Spirit. They can build up or tear down. It is only when we surrender and allow God's word to take root in our heart that our words will bring life and not death to ourselves and others.

MEMORY VERSE.

Ephesians 6:14-15 NLT - 14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life _____

Challenge.- Continue to work on memorizing Ephesians 6:10-17.

“The Power of the Tongue”

Every Day Holy- #5

INTRODUCTION

As we fight the daily battles to be holy, we find one area that often causes us to stumble and fall is our tongue, or rather the words it produces. You can probably think back to something you said this week that you wish you hadn't. Either it was hurtful to someone else, or it was reinforcing an action or attitude in you that was not pleasing to God. Why does this happen and how do we change it? In his epistle, James addressed this problem which was common among believers in the church at that time.

Ice Breaker

What is one thing you remember someone said to you that really blessed you or made a difference in your life?

Key Passage

James 1:19 NLT - 19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Time to Grow Up

James 1:19-21, 26 NLT - 19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. ... 26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

As James encourages the believers he is writing to, he includes instruction on how we should use our words.

In James 1:19 what are we to do quickly, and what should we do slowly? In what way does this reflect an attitude of humility and considering others above ourselves? In verses 20 and 26 James addresses an attitude of self-righteousness. What is the connection between anger, self-righteousness and an uncontrolled tongue?

If you look closely at verse 21 you will find that there is a connection between what we have in our hearts and what comes out of our mouths. James says either we have the word of God there, or we have sinfulness. The passage actually says we need to humbly accept God's word *emphytos* (grafted or implanted) in us, like a seed taking root in the soil of our heart.

2. You Have Influence

James 3:1-2 NLT - 1 Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

James begins here by focusing on teachers in the church. These were highly respected individuals who used their words to instruct in the doctrines of the faith. They were the influencers of their time. James indicates they will be held to a stricter standard.

Why do you think there is a stricter judgement for a teacher in the church who misuses his influence through what is spoken? Perhaps you have seen the fallout of notable pastors whose teaching or lifestyle derailed their followers from God's intended path. They are accountable to God for the wreckage left in their wake. What does James say could be possible if we were able to control our tongues (v.2)

James 3:3-5 NLT - 3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.

James gives us three examples of what the tongue is like: a bit, a rudder and a spark. All are described as small but having influence

over something much larger. As we gain spiritual maturity, we will be better in step with God's Spirit and more in control of our tongue.

James 3:5b-6 NLT – 5 But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

James says the tongue corrupts "the body". Can you give an example of how that might be true for "the body" meaning a person and an example of what it would mean to corrupt "the body" as a community of believers?

James 3:7-8 NLT 7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.

Proverbs 18:21 NLT - 21 The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.

James 3:8 is a sobering statement. No one can tame the tongue. In the Greek text this says "no man" can tame the tongue. We cannot rely on our own will power or resources to conquer our natural tendencies to use our words as a weapon. It takes God's Holy Spirit to control our tongue.

We may fail to recognize the power of an uncontrolled tongue. The verses above refer to the tongue as being evil, poison and capable of bringing death, but also of giving life. Have the words of others inflicted pain that you still carry? If so, this would be a good time for the members of your group to use their words to speak life and healing over you.

3. Praising and Cursing

The words we speak reveal our hearts. And this is not only true of how we speak to other believers, but also of how we treat all people. Our culture may justify bashing those who we disagree with, but that is not what Jesus taught. James tells us it is wrong to speak praises to God, but curse those made in His image. That would be hypocrisy, and in Matthew 5 Jesus tells us how we are to act as children of God. It is not just loving your neighbor; it is loving your enemy.