

## The Talk

### Key Scriptures

James 3:1-12 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

<sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

**Key Point:** Our speech can be a good gauge of our spiritual maturity.

## TALK IT OVER

**Start talking:** Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Which of the following 3 common expressions do you think are true? (Why or why not?) "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." "If you have nothing nice to say don't say anything at all." "Loose lips sink ships."

**Start thinking:** Questions to get your group thinking.

- James 3:1 indicates that those who teach in the church are judged or under greater scrutiny in the words they speak. Do you think the level of scrutiny is appropriate?
- James 3:2 suggests if you are able to be perfect in what you say you are able to keep your whole body in check. Why do you think that is?
- James 3:8 states no human being can tame the tongue. Does this make you feel defeated or hopeless in this area?
- Does thinking about others (even those you may not particularly like) as created in God's image reorient the words you would speak about them? (See v 9)

**Start sharing:** Questions to create openness.

- Have you ever said something you wished you could take back or heard something you wished you could unhear? How did that make you feel?
- Do you believe the words you say can chart the course or direction for your life? If yes, How so?
- V. 3-6 states that although the tongue is small it can be powerful in both direction and destruction. How do you think technology has impacted the power of the tongue? Is it generally good, bad, or neutral?

**Start doing.**

- Romans 5:5 teaches God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 12:34 + 17:18 Jesus says the mouth speaks what the heart is full of & the things that come out of a person's mouth come from their heart. James 3:9-10 indicates that praising God from the same mouth that curses those made in his image is incompatible and should not be. Connecting these elements, how are you doing in this area of spiritual maturity?

**Prayer Requests.** It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

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