

This week...

Monday James 3:3-4 *“³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or 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.”*

We are 2,000 years separated from James. Can you think of other examples where small things have a huge effect on larger things?

Tuesday James 3:5-6 *“⁵Likewise 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. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”*

This is to be a private moment. On a separate sheet, write down remembered statements by others that caused you much pain or personal damage. It is very likely that this involved lies and distortions, but the hurt was real. It's easy to remember what others said that wounded us, but can you write down those things that come to mind when you made great boasts or statements that created big problems for someone else? In each case, ask yourself if there is need to ask forgiveness of God AND of the other person(s) involved. Pray over your lists, and then destroy them.

Wednesday James 3:7-8 *“⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”*

Why would James say no one can tame the tongue? What would be the solution to overcome such a restless evil full of deadly poison? Think “self-control”, and speaking only words that are noble and pure that build up. Do a little digging in the Bible to see what else will help us control the tongue.

Thursday James 3:9-12 *“⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”*

No one would doubt the truth expressed here, but consciously note during the remainder of the day how often your thoughts and tongue are filled with praise versus cursing. How might you change your pattern of thinking and speaking to be more a spring flowing with fresh water than salt?

Friday Matthew 12:34 *“From the overflow of our heart the mouth speaks”*

Read all of Matthew 12:33-37. If you made a note yesterday of praise versus cursing attitudes and speech, meditate on this passage as you consider the weight of your words and the fruit that you bear. Only you and God know the full extent of what is in your heart, but do not get up until you have allowed His Spirit to examine and teach you in light of what flows from your heart to your mouth.