

Session # 5: James 3:1-12
Small Group Questions

1. The tongue is a small part of the body, like a bit in a horse's mouth, a rudder on a ship, a spark in a dry forest. Similarly its power is way out of proportion to its size. Think of an experience you've had that proved this to be true. What did you learn through that experience?
2. James warns that not many of us should "*presume*" to be teachers. What does he mean by that? Can you think of a time you were tempted in that way?
3. Why will "*we who teach*" be "*judged more strictly?*" What is at stake?
4. Only perfect people are "*never at fault*" in what they say. They are able to "*keep their whole body in check.*" What is it about using your tongue that makes it so hard to stay in control?
5. James uses strong language in verses 5 and 8, emphasizing the tongue's power for ill rather than good, for destruction rather than instruction. Why do you think James (and God) saw fit to use such strong language here?
6. Stan made the point in his sermon that "talking" often becomes "teaching," whether intentionally or not. Have you been in circumstances where you were "afraid to talk?" Have you ever needed to talk but kept silent? Why?
7. Verses 9-12 talk about the relationship between our words and our integrity. Have you ever been surprised by what you said? Do you ever remember thinking, "Wow—did those words really just come out of my mouth?" Talk about that experience, and what followed. Our words can be a revealer of our interior, hidden life. How can God use those moments of "revelation" to reshape us from the inside?
8. James gives no hint of the possibility of using our tongues well ("No man can tame the tongue.") What hope might there be in James 1:5, or 1:16-18, or 1:25-27? Can God help us to tame our tongues?
9. Check out I Peter 3:15. How does "costly grace" enable the process of taming your tongue?
10. Are you in a relationship right now where you need wisdom to know when to speak and when not to speak? Talk about those struggles and try to glean wisdom from each other.

Close in prayer together.