

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 18TH, 2022 // BOOK OF JAMES

WORDS (JAMES 3:1-12)

TEACHING

James is warning us that much prayer and care should go into becoming a teacher of God's word. Although this is directed to church leaders, it should apply to all who are called to "make disciples of all nations."

- **This is serious business because the words we use as teachers have an eternal impact for us and the ones who are being taught.**

MATURITY

We know that maturity isn't perfection, for "we all stumble in many ways."

- **When we start to think that we have complete control of our words, we become arrogant and believe that we are always right. We must never forget our potential to sin, especially when it's as simple as a phrase.**

POWER

The illustrations of a horse, a ship, and fire reveal the true power of words: **to build or destroy.**

- **A person with a proud and critical heart will stir up strife, gossip, criticize everything, and leave a path of wounded souls that may take years to heal. Words hurt way more than sticks and stones!**

CONTROL

Animals may be trained, but "no one can tame the tongue."

- **One minute we're praising God, and a few minutes later we're judging, slandering, and gossiping about people we don't really know. The truth is we can't really change ourselves because our problem is even bigger than our mouths.**

THE REAL PROBLEM

James reveals the impossibilities... Fruit and water can be traced to their source, and words can be traced to the heart.

- **What comes from our heart reveals our spiritual condition. We are all guilty of sinning with our words, but God has made provision for the imperfect words we have spoken and believed: He changes us!**

WISDOM (JAMES 3:13-18)

WHO IS WISE?

"Who among you is wise and understanding?" is a rhetorical question.

- **James is saying that wisdom isn't just knowledge and an ability to explain your perception. Wisdom is not measured by degrees but by deeds. It's not just about acquiring truth; it's about applying truth to life!**

FALSE WISDOM

James says there is a wisdom that is "earthly, unspiritual, and demonic."

- **This wisdom only sees the immediate impact—what is best for self-advancement, self-pleasure now, and is motivated by self-centered ambition. This is the wisdom Satan offered in the garden and still offers today.**

DESTRUCTIVE WISDOM

This self-centered wisdom is full of envy, always comparing itself to others to see who is better or worse. James says this results in "disorder and evil."

- **There is a danger in all of our families and our churches whenever we pursue selfish concerns or partisan causes to the neglect of others. We need to be on guard.**

GODLY WISDOM

What we need is godly wisdom that comes from Heaven.

- **You don't get this wisdom from intellectual effort or practical experience as much as you get it from being with God. We must go to Him constantly in prayer and the Word, crying out for His perspective.**

HUMILITY

Only God can give godly wisdom, which is why it's motivated by God-centered humility.

- **One of the best ways to check wisdom is to remember that wisdom from God produces humility. But the world is exactly the opposite: Wisdom from the world produces self-centered pride.**

PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

In contrast to the disorder and evil that result from selfish ambition, wisdom from God results in peace and righteousness.

- **Peace is what God desires in our homes and churches, but not at the expense of truth. "Pure" means we will be honest with ourselves about our motives before we use our words.**

THE POWER OF WORDS

- Words have the power to build or destroy.
- **When we teach or are taught, we need to recognize the difference between God speaking and Satan speaking.**
- **As we grow and stay close to God, He will change us, and He will control the words of the surrendered Believer.**

THE POWER OF WISDOM

- Wisdom can be demonic or godly.
- **Demonic wisdom is self-centered, while godly wisdom is God-centered.**
- When we humbly go before God, and pursue His wisdom, it produces peace and righteousness. **It doesn't mean we always agree, but it does mean that together, we humbly seek God's wisdom and put aside selfish ambition.**

THE SOLUTION

- The Word of God is the ultimate solution to our word problem. **And God always has the final word!**
- We should pray for wisdom that is "pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense." Then, **God will help us sow words and works for His glory.**