

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

James 3

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James three begins with a warning for those desiring to be teachers. Being a teacher is more than dispensing information. Being a teacher involves speaking into people's lives and influencing them, you are a leader in their lives. It might seem out of place for James to immediately begin to speak about the tongue, but it is entirely appropriate. It is with the words of our mouth that we breathe both life and death. This is certainly true for those who stand before others as it relates to the things of God and to the truth as found in the Scriptures. James uses the examples of the bit of a horse's bridle and the rudder of a ship to show how relatively small parts of the whole can **determine the direction** of the thing mentioned.

James takes the power of the tongue to another level as he warns of the *destructive nature* of the fiery tongue. As the smallest of sparks can cause a forest fire that can **destroy generations** of growth, the tongue though very small and seemingly insignificant **can destroy lives**, and reputations, and can do more harm than the mind can imagine. In a day now passed the children would taunt each other with the saying, "**Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me!**" this is only a

quip, it is not reality. The truth is that our bones and tissue can heal while our emotions and minds *can be crushed so badly by other's words* and *we crush others with our words*, that it takes Divine intervention to recover and heal.

The dear Pastor finally likens the tongue to an unruly and untamable creature like none on earth or in the vast oceans. So unruly that it is like a poison that slowly and agonizingly kills all who ingest it. He piles on the analogies to try to convince those early followers of Jesus who are scattered among the nations that we must use the tongue to build up, edify, and encourage rather than allow it to be used as an instrument of death.

Ultimately the only one who can save us and redeem us, including our member we call the tongue is the God above. It is with God that we gain a heart of wisdom. Wisdom is not common sense, rather it is uncommon sense. Wisdom's origin is not on this earth or from within us but rather is from the God who allows us to know His heart and mind and act accordingly.

Prayer and Action Steps

God, grant us a heart of wisdom and the discipline we need, enabled by your grace to speak life and not death. May you teach us, so we can teach others the words of truth and life.

Amen