

## Life Group Homework

### The Awesome Power of the Tongue - James 3:1-12

#### Let's Get Started

Once upon a time an old man spread rumors that his neighbor was a thief. As a result, the young man was arrested. Days later the young man was proved innocent. After having been released he sued the old man for wrongly accusing him. In court, the old man told the judge: 'They were just comments, didn't harm anyone.' The judge, before passing sentence on the case, told the old man:

'Write all the things you said about him on a piece of paper. Cut them up and on the way home, throw the pieces of paper out. Then, tomorrow, come back to hear the sentence.'

The next day, the judge told the man: 'Before receiving the sentence, you will have to go out and gather all the pieces of paper that you threw out yesterday.' The old man said: 'I can't do that! The wind spread them, and I won't know where to find them.'

The judge then replied: 'In the same way, simple comments may destroy the honor of a man to such an extent that one is not able to fix it. If you can't speak well of someone, rather don't say anything.'

Group discussion:

- Why do you think it is difficult to "tame the tongue?" It gets us in trouble all the time. Yet, we find it so tempting to gossip, spread opinions that are not based on facts, and sometimes the tongue causes extended or even permanent damage to relationships. We know all of this. So, why is it so difficult to tame the tongue?

#### Let's Go Deeper

**Begin by reading James 3:1-12.**

- In your own words, what is the warning in each of the scriptures below?
  - Psalm 34:12-13
  - Matthew 12:36-37
  - Proverbs 26:22

## So you want to be a teacher?

### Read James 3:1

Apparently, James is speaking of certain people in the church who may have wanted "perks" that came along with being in the position of a teacher in the church, but they may not have been teaching responsibly.

- What kind of "perks" come along with being a teacher?
- What do you think qualifies a person to teach the Word of God in the church? Do a little bible research. What scriptures support your answer?

## What our words reveal

In Pastor Jerry's sermon, he made this statement: *"Your words eventually reveal the truth about your inner emotional state and your character."* His scripture reference is Mathew 12:34.

- Look up this scripture. What do you think the Psalmist meant when he chose to use the word "overflow?"

## The hellish potential of the tongue

*And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and **set on fire by hell**. **James 3:6***

*James uses the word fire to give us a picture of the tongue's overwhelming Satanic potential for evil and destruction of the individual, the church, and the world. The word "hell" in this verse literally means "valley of Hinnom." It was a deep gorge southwest of Jerusalem, where trash, garbage, and the bodies of dead animals and executed criminals were dumped and continuously burned. It had originally been used by Canaanite and even some Israelite worshippers to sacrifice their children as burnt offerings to the pagan god Molech.*

- According to **2 Kings 22:1** and then **23:1-10**, what godly king was responsible for putting an end to the terrible practice of child sacrifices? King \_\_\_\_\_.
- According to Matthew 12:36, among other things, what are we accountable for in the believer's judgment when we stand before Christ?

*In Old Testament Hebrew, the valley of Hinnom was called "Gehenna." Because the fires burned all the time and maggots were always present, Jesus used the term Gehenna to represent the unquenchable torment of being separated from the love of God for eternity. The phrase "set on fire by hell" is James' way of trying to get us to see that the tongue can be used as a tool of Satan, fulfilling hell's purposes to pollute, corrupt, and destroy.*

- *How did Jesus use the word picture of Gehenna in Mark 9:43-44? What was His main point?*
- *How did Isaiah use it, in Isaiah 66:24?*
- *What was Jesus' point in Matthew 5:22?*

## **Let's Live It Out Together**

The bible says what comes out of the mouth is a representation of the condition of our hearts. (See Matthew 12:34)

- According to Philippians 4:8, what seven types of things should we be thinking about and placing in our hearts and mouths?
  1. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Whatever is \_\_\_\_\_

Have someone in the group read **Ephesians 4:49**. Ask people in the group to think of specific ways the tongue can be a **curse** in the church—and specific ways how it can be a **helpful blessing** in the church.

*Don't forget to ask for prayer requests and praise reports!*