

Day 11

## A Good Word

### Read James 3

I praise you God for the new mercies that are mine today because of your great love and unending faithfulness. Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit as my daily help, comfort, and teacher. I believe that the Spirit's words give life and that every word you have spoken to me is a Spirit-word, life-making. I fully receive the words you have given me.

I recognize that sheer muscle and willpower will not make anything of consequence or eternal value happen, and I will seek you with all of my heart today in order to live well, live wisely, and live humbly. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer.

(Prayer based on: Lamentations 3:22-24, James 3:13-16, Psalm 18:14, John 14:26, John 6:61-65)

Day 12

## Word Power

### Read James 3:1-6

Each day, editors at Merriam-Webster Publishing spend an hour or two perusing a cross-section of published materials examining what, how, and how often words are used. Once new words have been used a large number of times in a variety of publications over a considerable period of time, they make the cut! About three months ago, the company added more than 1,400 words to its unabridged dictionary. This year's list includes words such as microbead, life hack, nomophobia, ICYMI (an abbreviation for "in case you missed it"), and bitcoin. The words on this list reflect our culture, technological advances, and emerging ideals. They are a sign of the times. Language is at the core of who we are, at the heart of our culture. Words have power.

James's words echo the strong message of Proverbs 18:21, "The tongue has the power of life and death." Although those of us who are teachers are held to a strict account for the use of words, we are all responsible for our words. Because the tongue is capable of setting your whole life on fire, seek the life-giving presence of the Living Water to extinguish that flame.

God, I commit to speaking life today rather than spewing sparks. I seek your words and your presence to this end. Amen.

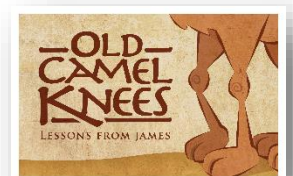
Day 13

## Controlling the Tongue

"This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue—it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth! My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don't bear strawberries, do they? Raspberry bushes don't bear apples, do they? You're not going to dip into a polluted mud hole and get a cup of clear, cool water, are you? James 3:7-12 MSG

1. What are some examples of an unruly tongue in your life? How have you used your words to bless God and others?

2. Earlier in James, the author gave instructions to be slow to speak (1:19) and to speak as those who will be judged (2:12). Again in James 3:7, we are told that no one can tame the tongue. Should we even bother trying? If so, how?



Help me, Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church, or closet, nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in thy presence. So may my every word and action have a moral content. May all the happenings of my life prove useful to me. May all things instruct me and afford me an opportunity of exercising some virtue and daily learning and growing toward thy likeness. Amen.  
-Susanna Wesley

Day 14

## Wisdom

Read James 3:13-18

1. What are the two kinds of wisdom James speaks of in this passage? What are the distinguishing characteristics of each?

2. What can you do this week to seek God's wisdom? Be specific.

3. Verse 18 of The Message version reads, "You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results *only* if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor." How can you plant seeds of peace (dignity, honor) this week?

Pray Psalm 119:73 and 79, "You made me; you created me. Now give me the sense to follow your commands. Let me be united with all who fear you, with those who know your laws. May I be blameless in keeping your decrees."

Day 15

## Remedy

James chapter three gives us much to be concerned about: a tongue set ablaze by the uncontrollable fire that comes from hell itself and earthly wisdom dripping in selfish ambition and jealousy. Yet in the context of God's word, we see a remedy for this restless evil full of deadly poison (3:8). Consider the following scriptures: **2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT** - Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! **Ephesians 4:23-24 NLT** - Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. **James 1:5 NLT** - If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. **Jeremiah 29:13 NIV** - You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. **Proverbs 4:11 NLT** - I will teach you wisdom's ways and lead you in straight paths. **Proverbs 21:23 MSG** - Watch your words and hold your tongue; you'll save yourself a lot of grief. **Luke 6:45 NLT** - A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart. **Psalms 90:12 NLT** - Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

For deeper study: Psalm 119

