

faith, hope, love

James 3:1-12
Inductive Discovery Lesson 4

Talking Your Faith Actions speak louder than words. That's a good rule to remember but is it always true? In chapter two, James said that it takes more than words to prove genuine faith. But as he points out in chapter three, this doesn't mean that words are powerless. James wrote about the power of the tongue to build up and to destroy. Think how different life would be if every Christian mastered the commands in this chapter! What if *you* resolved to harness the power and potential of your words for just one week?

James doesn't imply that talking your faith is simply a matter of willpower—although we could certainly use more of that. He wisely points out that talking your faith is a matter of the heart. It's been said that the tongue is a bucket drawing out what springs from deep within the heart. Hmm...what's been coming up in your bucket lately?

Working Text for James 3:1-12
English Standard Version (ESV)

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. **2** For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. **3** If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. **4** Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. **5** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

6 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. **7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. **11** Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? **12** Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

OBSERVE

Start by reading the entire chapter at least once. Now read each section and record what you see. **Use the first column to keep track of what you find in the Bible passage.** (Who? What? When? Where?) Briefly describe, *in your own words*, what it says.

Use the second column to keep track of information you get from other sources such as scripture references, a dictionary, concordance, maps, etc. You can also use this section to jot down **your thoughts, impressions or questions**. *Do your best to follow James' train of thought.* Does he use a word or phrase repeatedly, or emphasize a particular topic? Are his words urgent? Encouraging? Commanding? What issues or problems does he address? What questions does he ask?

James 3:1-5

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

James 3:6-12

Facts from the passage:

My Research and Personal Observations:

This image shows a full page of primary-ruled paper. It features two vertical columns of horizontal dashed lines, designed for handwriting practice. Each column contains 18 rows of lines. The entire page is white, and there are no margins or additional markings.

Key Words and Phrases

Write the definition of the following words and phrases. Use a regular dictionary or a Bible concordance with Greek Dictionary if you have one.

“perfect” (vs.2) _____

“blessing” (vs.10) _____

“cursing” (vs. 10) _____

INTERPRET

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as: Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? Is there an example to follow or avoid? **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**

APPLY

We don't study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new insight for me, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

James 3 :1-5

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

_____ ?

James 3 :6-12

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

_____ ?

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a title to the chapter to help you remember what it says.

Up close and personal

For we all stumble in many ways,
and if anyone does not stumble in what he says,
he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.
James 3:2 ESV

Memorize God's Word

Choose the translation you prefer to memorize the verse in and re-write it here.

Meditate on God's Word

While you memorize this verse, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea—the longer it steeps, the richer the flavor. So give yourself permission to slowly savor God's Word! Use the questions below (like a tea bag) to keep dipping into this verse.

Challenge alert: You won't always see an obvious answer directly from the verse. Just *think and pray* about it and share what the Lord brings to your heart and mind.

Look up. What does this verse teach you about God? (For example, look for signs of His character, His attributes, His works, His promises.)

Look around. What does this verse teach you about the world and people in general?

Look within. What does this verse teach you about yourself?

Look ahead. Does this verse give you reason to hope? Briefly share your thoughts.

Look alive! Given the opportunity, how would you express the truth found in this verse to someone who needs to hear it?

Make God's Word Your Prayer

As you memorize and meditate on this verse, pray it back to the Lord. Let the Holy Spirit examine your heart, increase your understanding, and help you to pray. Ask Him for faith and strength to *act* on the truth of God's Word.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter? How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

To bridle the tongue does not mean to hold your tongue...
It means to have the tongue under the control of a disciplined heart.
That tongue need never apologize.
- Oswald Chambers -

