

“HOW TO MANAGE YOUR MOUTH”

James – Doing Church Right #5

INTRODUCTION

In the prior chapter, James warns us against speaking things that our actions do not support. In this chapter, we find out the dangers of our tongues, by examining the power of our words. If left unmanaged, the tongue can be a devastating force. But how are we to manage this powerful and unruly member of our body? Only through God’s wisdom and grace are we able to rule over our tongues. This study offers four points to apply as you learn to manage your mouth.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Do you remember your child’s first word? (or know your own first word)

Study Questions (45 MIN)

ADMIT YOUR NEED FOR CHANGE

Q1. Read James 3:2; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Matthew 12:36-37

James 3:2 tells us what everyone needs to recognize; we all stumble. Though we don’t like to admit it, how does Solomon express the same truth in Ecclesiastes 7:20? But knowing that “everyone does it” cannot be our excuse for allowing our words to do damage. What did Jesus tell the Pharisees would happen on the day of judgment (Matthew 12:36-37)? Have you spoken a careless word in anger that you wish you could take back or missed an opportunity to speak forgiveness or encouragement to someone? Even if you can’t relive the past, you can apologize or deliver that unspoken word.

ACCEPT THE POWER OF YOUR WORDS

Q2. Read James 3:3-4; Ecclesiastes 5:6; John 8:44; James 1:19

The tongue can be a powerful tool for evil. What warning does Ecclesiastes 5:6 give to those who don’t keep their mouth under control? James compares the power of the tongue to that of a bit in the mouth of a horse or the rudder on a ship. What kinds of tragedies have you observed that resulted from an unbridled tongue? What insight does John 8:44 give us into the power behind lies? What circumstances do you find can lead you to speaking words that cause injury? How can you apply James 1:19 in such situations?

AVOID BRAGGING

Q3. Read James 3:5-8; Proverbs 16:18; James 4:6

The definition of the word for boast (*aucheō*), used by James is “any kind of haughty speech, which stirs up strife or provokes others.” Not only does it provoke others, what does Proverbs 16:18 tell us accompanies a haughty spirit? What is God’s view of pride (James 4:6)? Based on James’ statement in verse 8, where can we find the power to tame the tongue and avoid bragging?

ADOPT GREATER INTEGRITY

Q4. Read James 3:9-12; Matthew 5:44; Job 31:6; Psalm 101:2

In the first chapter of his book James warns us about being double-minded, and in this passage he tells us we should not bless God and curse man with the same tongue. Why would doing so represent a lack of integrity? How would following the command of Matthew 5:44 prevent us from falling into this sin? Cursing in this sense is not profanity, but wishing evil on somebody. What are some of the ways we “curse” others with our words? If someone has spoken hurtful words over you, ask God to help you to forgive that person and show you if there is a way to be reconciled.

Wrap-Up

If we are going to be the people and church that God intends us to be, we will not permit our mouths to be out of control. Rather, we should avoid self-centered bragging and cursing, and instead lovingly speak words that are true, useful and timely so that together, we may be built up, maturing together in our spiritual life.

Memory Verse

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak
- Matthew 12:36 ESV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: _____

Challenge:

Use your words this week to bring a special blessing to someone who needs encouragement. Try applying the “THINK” test before you speak by asking, “Is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Needed, Kind?”

Q1

James 3:2 ESV - 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.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 ESV - 20 Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

Matthew 12:36-37 ESV - 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Q2

Ecclesiastes 5:6 ESV - 6 Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

James 3:3-4 ESV - 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.

John 8:44 ESV - 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

James 1:19 ESV - 19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;

Q3

Read James 3:5-8 in your Bible.

Psalms 10:3 ESV - 3 For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.

Psalms 12:3-4 ESV - 3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, 4 those who say, "With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?"

Proverbs 16:18 ESV - 18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

James 4:6 ESV - 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Q4

James 3:9-12 ESV - 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.

Matthew 5:44 ESV - 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Job 31:6 ESV - 6 (Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity!)

Psalms 101:2 ESV - 2 I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;

Prayers Con't: _____
