



## JAMES: The Power of Words

Pastor Derek Sanford

November 6, 2016

### Life Group Discussion Questions:

1. As you think about this week's sermon, what one thing do you particularly remember?
2. Pastor Derek said that the sermon's big idea was: Our words are a window to our soul. Since our words provide an indisputable diagnosis of the state of our souls, read together **James 3:1-12** for guidance on how to reverse a negative diagnosis.
3. Pastor Derek pointed out four truths from the third chapter of James.
  - a. We all make mistakes with our words (in person or on social media).  
Resolved to control our words, we may be surprised that **verse 2** seems to give us a ready-made excuse for failure, since James says, "For we all stumble in many ways..." Can you share a time when you held someone else strictly accountable for their misspoken words, in contrast to your leniency toward yourself? How did that work out?
  - b. Our tongue has incredible power to bless or to curse.  
**Verses 3-6** tell us that the tongue is small, but it can be "a fire...setting on fire the entire course of life..." Solomon affirms this in **Proverbs 18:21**: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Pastor Derek gave the acronym THINK as a helpful tool to use in controlling our tongue's great power. When might this acronym be most useful to you?  
**T = is it true?**  
**H = is it helpful?**  
**I = is it inspiring?**  
**N = is it necessary?**  
**K = is it kind?**
  - c. Our own will power is not enough to handle the incredible power of our words.  
**Verse 8** makes the task of controlling our tongue seem impossible: "...no human being can tame the tongue." Who *can* tame our tongue? See **Psalms 141:3-4** for David's answer.
  - d. Our words reveal our true spiritual condition.  
What does James' analogy mean in **verses 11 and 12**, where he says we can identify a tree by its fruit? What does the tree represent? What does the fruit represent? Read **Ezekiel 36:26** for God's solution to the problem.

**Application:** Do a self-checkup on the state of your soul -- and your relationship with God -- by challenging yourself this week to go 24 hours using your words only for good. Every day practice using two of the most basic words you learned as a child: "I'm sorry." Then practice adding just two more powerful words: "Forgive me."

**Verse to Remember:** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **Ephesians 4:29**