James 3

*“Mouth Control”*

**Scripture:** James 3:1-18

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 19:14;*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”*

**Lesson Focus:** We need God’s wisdom for controlling our mouths.

**Activities and Craft:** Coloring Picture, Work Sheet

Craft for 1st and 2nd Grades: I will not “whine” poster

# Introduction: Take a thermometer, and ask the kids what it is used for?

Today we are going to talk about a way to take our “spiritual temperature!”

James has been saying that the way we live shows our faith in Christ. In the same way the things that we say reveal our “spiritual temperature.” Let’s take a look!

**Bible Study:**

Finish this phrase for me, *Sticks and stones can break my bones, but\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(words can never hurt me?)*

Do you think that is a true statement?

Have you ever been hurt by what someone has said to you?

Have you ever hurt someone else by something you said?

Is it easy or hard to control what you say? Why?

James starts out by addressing teachers, and telling them that they will be judged by what they say. He then moves on to talk about the tongue and how hard it is to control.

**James 3:1**

**√** Why do you think James says this about teachers?

**√** What type of teachers is James talking about? (teachers of the Bible)

**√**  Why does it matter to God about who teachers the Bible or not?

**Tongue Management #101:**

James is going to teach an important lesson on our tongue?

**√** What does the bible mean when it says the word “tongue”?

* When someone goes on a diet, what are they trying to control?
* Why is it so hard?
* When someone goes on a diet they are trying to control their food intake. It’s hard because we LOVE food!
* The same thing is true with our tongues. We LOVE to talk, and many times we don’t “control” what we say. We hear cool things on the TV or in movies or at school, and we want to sound like everyone else. We want to be COOL!
* **“It’s a control issue!”**

1. **Self-control! 3:2**

3:2 – Has anyone here ever made mistakes? Verse 3 says that if you’re living and breathing you will make mistakes in life. But if you learn to control your tongue it says that you can also control yourself in every way. This verse says that the tongue is the hardest thing to control!

1. **The Tongues Power! 3:3-6**

## Tiny but Powerful! 3:3-4

To drive the point home, James uses two illustrations in verses 3&4, what are they and how do we control them?

Horse – bit in its mouth

Ships – rudder

* So we can control a great big horse by this little thing that we put in it’s mouth called a “bit.” The “bit” has been used since at least 100 BC to help man train a horse. They used to use pieces of bone or antlers from animals. Now we use the same method just different material such as metal. The bit is attached to the reins which enable the rider to let the horse know which way to turn.
* We can control a great big boat by a rudder. A rudder is the small piece of wood or metal that is attached to the steering mechanism and the bottom of the boat. It enables the person steering the boat to steer the boat in the right direction.
* Do you see what James is saying here! Both a “bit” and a “rudder” are used to control things that are MUCH bigger. They are both small compared to what they control but they work and work well! On the other hand the tongue is a small piece of our bodies and yet it is very hard to control. And it can do tremendous damage!

1. **Tiny but Destructive! 3:5-6**

* A Spark! What is a spark? (For all of those who remember the old tune “It only takes a spark, to get a fire going...”) What can a tiny spark can do? Have you guys ever seen the news about a giant forest fire and how it was started by the tiniest source? A small spark can burn down a forest.
* James uses very strong words here about the force of this spark?
  + Look at how he describes this “tongue of fire.”
  + full of wickedness
  + can ruin your whole life
  + can turn the course of your life
  + can destroy things in your life
  + set on fire by hell itself

Do you think that he is speaking too strongly here in verse 6b? Who is he saying that gives fuel to the “fire?” (hell, itself)

1. **Tiny but Uncontrollable; 3:7-12**

* Can’t be tamed, 3:7
* Uncontrollable evil, 3:8
* 2-Faced
* Can praise God
* Can curse Man

From the same source come praises and curses.

And yet James gives us examples of things that come from one source, what are they?

* spring of water can’t produce fresh water and salty water
* you cannot get olives from a fig tree
* you cannot get figs from a grapevine

What is James saying here?

**Bottom Line:** What you say is who you are!

**Read:** Matthew 15:18, “But evil words come from an evil heart and defile the person who says them.”

What you say comes from inside, it reveals who you are! That’s why it is so important what we watch on TV or the movies, because once we hear it we remember it. Have you ever heard the phrase “garbage in garbage out?”

Let’s look at what the Bible says about the “words” that we say:

**Our “words” are to be acceptable to God!**”

**Psalm 19:14;** *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”*

**God hates lying.**

**Proverbs 12:22:** *“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.”*

**The “right” words.**

**Proverbs 15:1:** *“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

**Proverbs 15:23,** *“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is.”*

**Ephesians 4:29;** *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”*

**Colossians 4:6:** *“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”*

**Wisdom Management #102: James 3:13-18**

1. **The Claim! James 3:13a**

**Wisdom!** If you are wise and understand God’s ways! In our study of the tongue, we are told that a spring of water cannot bubble out both fresh and salt water! It is one or the other! It depends on its source!

**2. The Result! James 3:13b** Now James moves to that source in our lives...If you are wise.....if you understand God’s ways....your life show it!

* What does it tell us will pour forth in verse 13? (good conduct) He’s just finished telling us that it depends on the source if a pool of water is salty or fresh! Now he tells us that if that source in our lives is God’s Wisdom...good deeds will pour forth! Isn’t that amazing! If we are connected to God our life will pour forth good deeds!
* Now the $100.00 question is this, what are good deeds?

1. **The Attitude! James 3:13c – 16**
2. **Bragging Rights! 3:13c**

* Do you guys know anything about attitude? When you think of attitude what do you think of?
* There’s a catch to all of this good-deed doing! Read the last part of verse 13?
* When you do something for someone, do you want to be noticed? How do you feel when know one acknowledges your hard work?
* Is it really bragging when you are just letting everyone know how hard you worked?

1. **That Green-Eyed Monster! James 3:14-16**

* Jealousy and selfishness
* Worst kind of lie
* Earthy & unspiritual
* Motivated by the devil
* Causes Disorder
* Where you will find every kind of evil.
* Do you really think that jealousy and selfishness are that destructive?

Attitude is everything! God has always cared about our motives! (A motive is the reason why we do things.) I believe that selfishness and jealousy are two of the hardest things to keep under Gods-control. We do things to get noticed...we do things so that we will be better than everybody else...we get upset when someone else gets the attention or praise! It is very hard to be the kind of person God wants us to be and to do it with the right motive.

**4. The Real Thing! James 3:17-18**

The first thing that James says in verse 17, is “the wisdom that comes from heaven.” This wisdom has a source.

Let’s describe this wisdom according to James in verse 17?

1. pure
2. peace loving
3. gentle
4. yield’s to others
5. full of mercy
6. full of good deeds
7. not partial
8. always sincere

What a list! I don’t know about you but that list doesn’t sound like me. It sounds like God!

And when we rely upon “heavenly wisdom” to live our lives we will “reap a harvest of goodness.” To “reap a harvest” is to have a good result to what you have worked at planting.

Relying upon God produces results! Some of those results we will never see! And from these verses we should not look for praise and affirmation from the good things that God calls us to do!

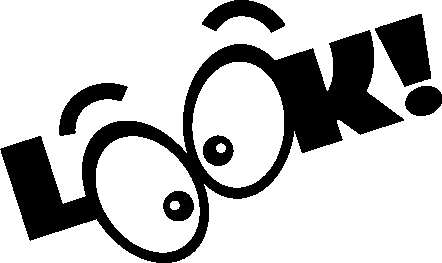
**Bottom Line:**

Living life “God’s way” results in good deeds for the glory of God!

Spend some time with your class talking about ways that you could use to control your tongue. There are no simple answers, but we need to pay attention to what we say. Because once something is said, it cannot be taken back!

There used to be a slogan from the National Forest Agency that said,

**“Only you can prevent forest fires!”**

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1. Do you think what James is saying here is true, that the tongue is a hard thing to control? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that you could hurt someone with words more than with a physical hard punch?
3. Why is it hard to forget the hurtful words that someone has said to you?
4. Why do you think it’s important not to curse another human being (3:9)?
5. Do you believe that some of the TV shows and the Movies that are out today are good for a Christian to watch? Why or why not?
6. James 3:11, talks about fresh water and salt water cannot come from the same stream. Talk about “changing the source of your spring” and how that would affect the words you say?
7. There was a lot of negative talk in these verses about the damage of what we say. But it started out in 3:2, talking about taking control! Someone has said, “God put the tongue in a cage behind the teeth, walled in by the mouth.” What steps can you think of to take control of what you say?
8. Do you think that it is hard to do something for someone, and not get praised for it?
9. Do you like to brag? When and or what things do you brag about?
10. How do you respond to a friend that always brags? Why does it bother us?
11. Next time you want to brag about something, what steps can you take to control that “urge?”
12. When do you ask God for wisdom?