

## Discussion Guide

Week 4

James 3:1-18

### Discussion Starter

Describe a time when you made a seemingly “harmless” comment that resulted in significant pain.

In hindsight, do you wish that you had said it differently, or do you wish that you hadn't said it at all? (optional: using this question, take a quick poll of your group with a show of hands.)

### Introduction

Remember our goal: to enjoy God's presence and let His Word shape our lives. As we study, we do more than learn about God, we encounter Him - the sovereign, loving Lord of the universe. We experience worship, and intimacy with Him, and life transformation as we humbly place ourselves under His loving care and guidance.

### Pray

Begin with prayer. Ask God to meet with you and instruct you through His Word. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth.

### Read James 3:1-5

Verses 3-5 include three examples that illustrate what general principal?

What does this tell us about the power of what we say?

What are some implications of this truth?

In addition to our passage today, the book of James addresses our speech in several other verses (1:19, 1:26, 2:12, 4:11, 4:13-16, 5:12). Read these other verses. Taken all together, what do these verses teach us about the importance of our speech?

### Read James 3:6-12

In verses 6-8 we see the general qualities of human speech when it is motivated by our natural tendencies. What are the characteristics described here?

Wow! These descriptions are not good! Is anyone able to speak rightly all the time? (see v. 8 and v. 2)

In verse 9 we see that Christians can struggle with hypocrisy in what we say to God and what we say to people. In verses 10-12, what principle is being illustrated?

Read 1 John 4:20-21 and Luke 6:43-45. These passages also describe the same principle. If we struggle with our speech, where is the root issue?

### Read James 3:13-18

This section describes two kinds of wisdom. What is the source of each kind?

What is the outcome of each kind?

### **Application – Putting Your Faith To Work**

Look at the description of the “wisdom from above” in verse 17. Of the eight qualities listed, take a moment to ask God which one or two that He would want you to grow in. [PAUSE a couple minutes, allowing the Holy Spirit time to work in our hearts.] Write it down, and then share it with your group when you pray for one another.

Take some time individually in silent prayer. Ask God to bring to mind anything you have said that was hurtful or false. [PAUSE a few minutes, allowing the Holy Spirit time to work in our hearts.] Ask for God’s forgiveness, then write down the name(s) of people you need to seek out and apologize to. Write a date by which you will seek to make things right.

### **Pray Together**

Prepare to pray for the person on your left. As a group, share with one another the one or two qualities of godly wisdom that God would want you to grow in. Then pray all together, each person praying for the person on your left.

Have the group end in worship/prayer to the God they have been with. (*“How can we turn our knowledge about God into knowledge of God? The rule for doing this is simple but demanding. It is that we turn each truth that we learn about God into matter for meditation before God, leading to prayer and praise to God.”* — J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*)