Lesson 23 James 3:1-12

Taming The Tongue

1. What are the three powers of the tongue?

2. Challenge Question: The author suggests that not many people should become teachers (vs. 1). Can you think of any examples of religious leaders or teachers whose lives people have judged more strictly than other people?

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you realize that we will be judged more strictly

3. Why do you think the tongue has such control over our lives as to be compared to a "bit" and a "rudder"
(vs. 3-4)?

3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we also guide their whole bodies.

4 It is the same with ships: even though they are so large and driven by fierce winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot’s inclination wishes.

4. What contrary forces do the "bit and rudder" (and the tongue) need to overcome?

5. What is the point of comparing the tongue to a fire and to world of evil (vs. 5-6)?

5 In the same way the tongue is a small member and yet has great pretensions. Consider how small a fire can set a huge forest ablaze.

6 The tongue is also a fire. It exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body and setting the entire course of our lives on fire, itself set on fire by Gehenna.

6. Why is it so difficult to control the tongue (vs. 7-8)?

7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species,

8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

7. James has focused on the destructive power of the tongue. In what ways can the tongue also bring refreshment and healing?

8. What in this text gives you added strength and encouragement to be more careful with your words?

9. How have you given more affirmation and encouragement to those you came in contact with this week?

10. What have you found helpful in controlling your tongue?