



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
James 3: 1-12 | October 12, 2025

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue in our series at James looking at his insights on taming the tongue. We all have first-hand experience of saying words that have hurt another and being hurt by another person's words. This passage is convicting and invites us all to consider how our words reflect our interior life and can either build others up or do great harm.

II. Connecting with One Another

When was a time your words hurt another? Did you notice that they affected them? Did you take responsibility?

When was a time another's word hurt you? Did you tell them? If not, how did you let go of the words they said and how it affected you?

III. Study the Text

Read James 3: 1-2

- James begins by giving a harsh warning to anyone who teaches God's Word revealing that anyone who teaches will be held to a higher standard.
- Remember during this time most teaching was only through oral teaching and people did not have access to Scripture themselves. What are the potential dangers for those who teach or lead others, especially when their words are unrestrained?

Read James 3: 3-6

- Next, James moves on to give a few examples of the impact our words can make. What are the three examples he gives? How do they illustrate the tongue's immense power, and why is it hard to control?

Read James 3: 7-8

- James then reveals how all sorts of animals can be tamed but the tongue cannot. What does it mean that the tongue is difficult to tame, and why can't humans control it through their own strength?



Read James 3: 9-12

- Lastly, James hones in on how our tongue is inconsistent. Why does this inconsistency matter to those who believe in Jesus?
- What do the questions about springs, fig trees, and olive trees teach us about the nature of the tongue and the heart?

Reflect and Respond

- In what ways can your speech become a tool for demonstrating God's kingdom and showing wisdom from above?
- What does it take to turn to God for the strength and help needed to control your tongue and speak life?

IV. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Thank God that He is in the work of transforming us, even our words.
- Ask God to reveal to you if your words have hurt someone lately and if prompted, ask God for forgiveness. Perhaps consider how you can apologize to the person your words may have affected.
- Praise God for the people in your life that have spoken words of encouragement and grace over you, deepening your trust in God's call on your life.
- Lift up those who have yet to hear the Words of life that Jesus offers. Consider how God may use you to share that with those you interact with today.

V. Digging Deeper

Take a few moments to look at other passages that talk about the danger of our tongue.

- **Proverbs 21: 23** – In what ways have you been able to guard your mouth?
- **Matthew 15: 11** – What is Jesus pointing out as the place our words stem from?
- **Ephesians 4: 29** – How have you grown into maturity by making sure your words build others up rather than tear them down?
- **Colossians 4: 6** – What is the balance between speaking honestly to others while being full of grace?

