

**Words Matter:** Spend five minutes writing down words that describe who you are. They can be titles (Mother, Doctor, Professor, etc.) or descriptive adjectives (beautiful, messy, funny, greedy, etc). Write as many words as you can in the time given without editing your list. Let the words come from your mind and heart with honesty and authenticity.

- Did you write mostly positive or negative words?
- Circle three words that have shaped you the most in life.
- Share the three circled words with your group.
- What words would God use to describe you?

**CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE** (Read the passages and review the sermon outline. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.)

- Read James 3:1-12.
- Read the main points from the sermon outline.
- What topic in the sermon and scripture stood out to you?
- Why would Christian teachers be held to a higher standard according to James?
- James uses several metaphors of small things with great power e.g. bridles, rudders, and sparks. Is there a modern metaphor that would help you better understand the immense power of the tongue?
- Words can be both constructive and destructive (praising v. cursing). What constructive things have words accomplished in other places in scripture?
- How has God's Word been fresh water in your life?

**CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD** (select one question for discussion)

- What words does the world need to hear today from the Lord?
- If the mouth speaks what the heart is full of (Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45), how can we best alter our speech to reflect God's humility and wisdom?
- Which do you most want to get rid of: anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language or lying? Which do you most want to put on: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiveness, love?
- When you know the right words to say to another person, what prevents you from speaking truth; be it encouragement, admonishment, scripture, or praise?
- Who could use your words as fresh water to the thirsty (building up), instead of salt water to the parched (tearing down)?

## PRAYER

End your time in prayer writing down any prayer requests in your journal.

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

October 10, 2021  
Pastor Mike McClenahan

# HUMILITY & WISDOM

### WEEK 3—JAMES 3:1-12 (NIV)

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. <sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. <sup>5</sup> Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup> The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

### Speaking to teachers and the church...

1. **We all fall short of perfection.**  
*We all stumble in many ways.*

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.  
**Colossians 3:16 (NIV)**

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... **Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)**

(Message Outline Points on the next page.)

## MESSAGE OUTLINE POINTS

### 2. Our speech has great power.

*We put bits into the mouths of horses... or a small rudder... The tongue also is a fire...*

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. **James 1:19-21, 26 (NIV)**

But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other... **Colossians 3:8-9**

### 3. Therefore, we (especially teachers) keep our speech (and our hearts) in check.

*My brothers and sisters, this should not be.*

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.  
**Psalm 19:14**

Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. **Psalm 141:3 (NIV)**

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.  
**Luke 6:45 (NIV)**

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **Colossians 3:12-14**

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

October 10, 2021

*James: Humility and Wisdom*

Part 4: James 3:1-12

### CONNECT WITH GOD (choose one of these practices that best suits your group or use a practice from a previous week)

**Breath Prayer:** This ancient form of prayer is a reminder of the nearness of God in everyday life and his provision- even in each breath we take. As we breathe in, we pray in our mind and heart "Lord Jesus Christ..." and as we exhale, pray "have mercy on me." Do this in silence, together at your own pace, until everyone has prayed/breathed this ten times.

#### Gratitude:

Read: "In ordinary life we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich." —Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Letters and Papers from Prison*)

Journal: Make a list of the riches God has given you. Once you have filled a page, circle the one that stands out to you today and write a short sentence of gratitude to Jesus for giving you that gift.

**Opening Prayer:** Simply open your small group time in a focused prayer. Ask God to reveal his truth to you through scripture and the Holy Spirit. Give praise to God for what he has been doing in your life and the world, and recognize Jesus Christ as the great mediator between us and God.

### CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Journaling:** Many spiritual practices this year will require a journal. If you are a small group leader be prepared with paper and pen for those who are without. Please remember that there is no right way to journal. Journals can be intermittent, upside down, written, drawn, or doodled. They are a way to capture what God is doing in you over time. Journaling with your small group will include a prompt; however, in your time alone with God, allow the Spirit to be your leader.

(Small Group Questions continued on the back)