

Living Whole in a Fractured World: A Letter from James

“Whole People Guard Their Words”

October 2-3, 2021

This provides about one hour of focused reading and discussion. Use the portions you find most helpful.

Preview with a **video clip** on **James 1** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnXqAIDM9R8> from **minutes 1:00-3:25**.

1. What's going on? - a lot of **anger** and **shouting**

- Read **James 1:19-20**. How do you respond when you listen to angry talk? What topic do you find tempting you toward anger? What can you do about that?
- What can I do to bring peace to conversation? Read **Proverbs 15:1** and **18**, and **18:17**.

2. A lot of **talk** about **talk** - a repetitive **theme** in James' letter

- Read **Job 40:4-5**, **Psalm 19:14**, **Luke 6:43-45** and **Matthew 12:35**. How do my words advertise the condition of my heart?

3. The tongue has **power** to **direct** – horses and ships – the tongue **controlled**

- Read **James 3:1-12** and **Proverbs 25:14-15**. With a partner, briefly discuss a situation when your words had long-term effects.
- In the group, share a quote that has been a powerful influence in shaping your thinking or actions.

4. The tongue has **power** to **destroy** – wildfires, wild beasts, and poison – the tongue **corralled**

- Read **James 3:3-7**, **Psalm 141:3**, **Proverbs 13:2-3**, **12:18**, **18:17**. Why do you think James uses these comparisons? What can I do to practice “taming” my tongue?

5. The tongue has **power** to **bless** - springs, figs and grapes – the tongue **cleansed**

- Read **Psalm 35:28** and **139:4-6**, **Proverbs 10:21**, **15:1-4**, **16:23-24**, and **25:11-13**. From these passages, choose one verse each to discuss the power of the tongue.
- How can we purify our words?

Prayer ...*Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. You hem me in— behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. My tongue will speak of your righteousness and of your praises all day long. Amen.*

Close with a theme-related song:

- **“Let the Words of My Mouth”** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpsHvtU8_dA

If you have a prayer need, ask a friend or two here to pray with you and to support you in prayer this week.