

TODAY'S VERSES:

James 3:10

James 3:1-12

Proverbs 18:21

1 Corinthians 2:4

Luke 6:45

THIS WEEK, I CAN APPLY THIS LESSON
TO MY LIFE IN THESE WAYS:

MY NOTES:

JAMES

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART ELEVEN: JAMES 3:1-12
WHAT OUR WORDS REVEAL

JAMES

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART ELEVEN: JAMES 3:1-12 WHAT OUR WORDS REVEAL

James, in the previous verses, has talked about how true and real Christianity will come out in our words, actions, and hearts. In James Chapter 2 he finished speaking about the poor and our heart issues, now he moves that to our words (our speech). James shows that walking with Christ comes through a humility, our salvation is not about our self-sufficiency, but Christ's sufficiency.

To be spiritually poor is when we will come to God and say, "I am bankrupt and in debt to you, I need your mercy alone." Followers of Jesus must come to a moment where we see ourselves for who we are and Jesus for who He truly is. Jesus, through His poverty, has made us rich. James comes right out of talking about favoritism and prejudice and goes directly into the words we use with one another.

James will start talking to "teachers," but we must understand that we are all teaching people around us every day by the words we decide to use. All we say and do is teaching others some *thing*. The average person spends 1/5 of their life talking which means we need to understand 2 things about words:

- **Words are powerful.** They bless and they curse. Our words build up others or burn them to the ground.

Teachers (people) who slander, who make reckless accusations or verbal attacks, who grumble and quarrel, will naturally cause greater damage to their community. We need to use our words to heal and not to destroy. We need to use our words to protect others and not just try to protect ourselves or our organization. Christianity flourished not by great words but by the power of God's Spirit.

- **Our words reveal the progress of our faith and who we are.** A mark of maturity is self-discipline in the area of our words.

The tongue tends to get sharper and more aggressive as we grow older. If our hearts are bitter, our tongue seems to get stronger and more biting. This is why our words (which are powerful) reveal our progress in our relationship with Jesus.

The Gospel lets us see that our identity doesn't have to be wrapped up in ourselves or what others think about us. The Gospel, when rightly understood, can transform our mouths and begin to make us edifiers and encouragers. Let us continue to grow in an understanding that Christ's love and forgiveness rests on us and that who we are first and foremost are children of God.

Read James 3:1-12.

- What are your favorite kinds of words? (Jokes, stories, encouragement)
- Take some time to speak words of encouragement to each other.
- What does your speech reveal about your own heart?
- As we talked about the influence of teachers, what do you teach (influence) in your day to day? Are you proud of what you teach (influence)?
- How do you hope to grow in more godly teaching (influencing)?
- What's the most hurtful thing someone has ever said to you?
- In what ways have you purposefully tried to wound others with your words?
- For those who have been hurt by the words of others, are there steps you need to take toward forgiveness? If you have hurt others, can you ask for forgiveness?
- What does your speech reveal about your own heart?
- As we talked about the influence of teachers, how have you positively/negatively influenced those around you? How do you hope to grow in more godly influence?
- What do your words reveal about the progress of your faith and who you are?
- How can you rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to change you and your words?
- How does the Gospel enter the space of our mouth?
- What would it be like if Element became known as people marked by edification and encouragement?