

15. What, in contrast, are the consequences of the wisdom that is from above?

16. When you look at what is said in verses 17 and 18 is it fair to say that there are people who just don't seem interested in such things and if so why? What does verse 15 suggest about why that might be?

Pray

Pray for relationships, families and churches where damage has been done by careless or hurtful words. Pray for repentance, forgiveness and the healing of relationships.

Pray for those who teach that they would be mindful that they will be subject to stricter judgement. Pray that those who teach would submit themselves to the word of God and teach it faithfully and practice what they preach.

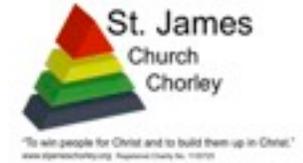
Pray for Paul McNally and others who are being ordained this summer and will be serving curacies over the next few years.

Pray also for those involved in selecting and training those who preach and teach, particularly for full-time ordained ministry, and that they themselves would follow the teaching of the Bible.

*David Phillips
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James

Week 5 : The Tongue & Wisdom



Read James 3.1-12

James returns to the subject of the tongue which we saw in study 2. Some will have looked at these verses in our previous studies on the Fruit of the Spirit and Proverbs.

The Tongue (v2-12)

1. In verses 3-4 James compares the tongue to a bit and to a rudder. Why does the tongue have such an impact? What do these illustrations imply about why control of the tongue is so important?
2. In verses 5-6 James compares the tongue with a small fire, "a world of unrighteousness". What is the point of this comparison?
3. Can you think of situations in which things have been said, or could be said, that poison (v8) friendships, families and even churches?
4. James gives a fairly bleak assessment of human nature in verses 2 and 8. Do you think this is right and if so why?

5. Should we therefore just give up, thinking it too hard? (cf. v10)

6. What ways can you think of in which the tongue can do great good? What example does James give in verse 9 and what picture does he use in verse 11 to illustrate this?

7. Why, according to this passage, should we not curse others?

8. Although James is writing about cursing people, what do you think when you hear people cursing God (taking the Lord's name in vain)? Do you ever respond to what people say and if so how?

Teachers (v1)

9. Why are those who teach judged with greater strictness? What is the link here to the tongue?

10. How do you think this fact should affect those who teach when they are preparing what they are going to teach?

11. What implications does it have for choosing clergy and others who teach the congregation or those who teach other groups (eg children) in a church?

The Wisdom from above

Read James 3.13-18

Notice how wise and wisdom are repeated in these few verses.

12. What do you think it means to show "works in the meekness of wisdom"? (v13)

13. In a similar way to the tongue what problems can jealousy and selfish ambition cause in a church?

14. Where, according to this passage, do jealousy and selfish ambition lead? (v16) Why is this?