



James 2:14-26

1. Living faith is _____ to the body of Christ. (v 14-17)

2. Living faith is _____ through our _____ (v 18-25)

Example #1: _____ our father

Example #2: _____ the prostitute

3. Living faith cannot be _____ from _____ (v.26)



DAY 1

Note: All definitions this week are taken from a combination of HELPS Word studies, NAS Exhaustive Concordance, Strong's Concordance, and Thayer's.

Pray: Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name." Pray now that as you study today and this week, the Lord would touch the fruit of your lips (your speech) and that your mouth would continually be filled with praise for Him.

Memorize: This week we will be memorizing James 2:18. It says, "But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." Write the verse on the lines now and say it aloud a few times. _____

Study: As we've studied James together, we've looked at many evidences of authentic faith in the Lord. This week we are going to learn that true faith is a maturing faith. James is going to show us that the evidence of this growing spiritual maturity can be directly seen in our speech. Begin by reading our passage for the week, James 3:1-12, and then answer the questions. Today we will be focusing on verses 1-2.

1. What is James' first caution to the believers? _____

2. Why does James give this warning? _____

3. There were many believers in the early church who wanted to be teachers because that position was seen as one of honor and importance. How and when are you tempted to rush into the spiritual spotlight like some of the early believers? _____

4. How might focusing on the greater responsibility and accountability of the “spotlight” influence your own choices and attitudes? _____

5. James begins verse 2 with this statement, “For we all stumble in many ways,” meaning that we all slip up, err, and sin in great amount. James is referring to those who teach as well as those who listen. He then gives us the mark of a “perfect,” or mature, person. What is it?

6. When you think of someone who is “perfect,” what attributes come to your mind?

7. Of all the attributes that James could have used to describe a mature believer, why do you think that purity of speech is the main indicator of “perfection?” (See Luke 6:45 if you need help)

8. The meaning of the word “perfect” used in verse 2 will help us to understand why pure speech is an indicator of maturing faith. It means “complete, full grown, mature, going through the necessary stages to meet the end goal.” A great illustration would be an old pirate’s telescope which unfolds bit by bit until it is completely extended and operating at full power. The person who uses pure speech is maturing in faith because she is operating in the full power of the Spirit, allowing the Spirit to transform her heart. How would you rate your own speech in relationship to the standard that James gives us? _____

9. What else does James say will be “bridled,” or controlled, when our speech is under the control of the Spirit? _____
10. What does this teach us about how we should focus on discipline in our lives? _____

11. What are some ways you need the Lord’s help in controlling your speech? _____



Pray: Philippians 1:6 says, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Thank the Lord that He is working in you to bring you to a complete and mature faith. Ask Him by his grace to transform your heart that your speech would be a demonstration of the glorious work that He is doing in you! _____

DAY 2

Pray: Isaiah 6:5 says, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Come before the Lord today and acknowledge the uncleanness of your lips. Humbly ask Him to transform your speech and your heart as you study.

Memorize: Write the first part of our verse on the line and say it out loud a few times.

James 2:18: _____

Study: Yesterday we learned that mature faith is demonstrated by purity of speech. Over the next few days we will be looking at different analogies that James uses to describe our speech and the power that it holds. Begin by reading James 3:1-12. Today we will focus on verses 3-5a.

1. Today James gives us two analogies that relate to our speech. What are they? Fill in the blanks below. The tongue is like....
 - a. the _____ in the mouth of the _____
 - b. the _____ on a _____
 - c. so also the tongue is a _____ member but it _____ of great things

2. How do you think the tongue is like the bit and the rudder? _____

3. Sometimes we assume small things are unimportant. James makes the argument that though the tongue is a small part of our body, it has the ability to direct our whole life because it “boasts of great things.” The word boast means, “any kind of haughty language which wounds and provokes others and stirs up strife, to bear oneself lofty in speech or action.”
- a. How would a boastful tongue direct a person’s life? _____

- b. What would it demonstrate about that person’s heart? _____

4. Let’s think more about the analogies that James gives. First, James relates the tongue to a bit in a horse’s mouth. A tiny bit (about 1.5 pounds) is able to persuade a large and powerful horse (about 1500 pounds) to obey its rider and the rider can then direct the horse wherever he needs to go. What can this analogy teach us about the power of the tongue? _____

5. Next, James relates the tongue to a ship’s rudder. In Bible times a rudder was called a steering oar and was used by a ship’s pilot. Large boats could easily veer off-course as their sails were pushed along by the wind. The steering oar would be used to keep the boat on a straight path. What does this second analogy teach us about the power of the tongue? _____

6. How are the truths of this passage applicable to your own life? _____

7. James teaches us that there is great benefit to our lives when we learn to control our tongue. Read the following verses and record some of the benefits of pure speech.
- Proverbs 12:18: _____
- Proverbs 15:4: _____
- Proverbs 15:23 _____
- Proverbs 16:24 _____
- Proverbs 22:11 _____

8. When and how have you benefited from a controlled tongue in your own life? _____

9. Think about your own speech now. Is your speech filled with “great boasts” as James describes in this passage? Do you use your speech to....*Wound others? Provoke others? Stir up strife? Make yourself look good?* Describe any struggles you have in any of these areas. _____

Pray: Just as the bit must overcome the will of the horse and the rudder must overcome the winds and waves of the sea, the tongue must overcome the old man and be controlled by the Spirit. Respond to the Lord now by writing a prayer to him. Specifically confess any areas of your speech that need His transforming touch. Thank Him that He can and will empower you to control your tongue so that it guides and directs your life towards what is right. _____

DAY 3

Pray: 1 Peter 3:10 says, “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit...” Ask the Lord to give you insight today into areas of your speech that are damaging your own life, and ask Him to give you the willingness to surrender those areas to His transforming touch.

Memorize: Write the second part of our verse on the line and say it out loud a few times.

James 2:18:

Study: Yesterday we saw the tongue’s power to direct our lives. Today we will look at another analogy for the tongue. Begin by reading our passage, James 3:1-12. We will focus on verses 5b-6.

1. James gives us another analogy to describe the tongue. Fill in the blanks from the first part of verse 6.

The tongue is a....

- a. _____.
 - b. a world of _____.
2. Think about James’ words in 5b. How is the tongue like a fire? _____

3. The phrase “world of unrighteousness” can also be translated “sea of trouble” or “deluge of wickedness.” According to commentators, the idea is that all the evil in the world can be found on a small scale in the tongue. What are some ways our tongues produce evil? _____

4. James then gives 3 more characteristics of the tongue. Fill in the blanks.

The tongue...

- a. _____ the whole body
 - b. sets on fire the entire _____ of _____
 - c. is set on fire by _____
5. Just like a fire would blacken a piece of wood, the tongue “blackens” our own lives by staining us. That stain, says James, affects the whole course and direction of our lives like the wheels on a gear. When one wheel turns, then the others are also turned. This is the power of the tongue to do damage in our lives. This damaging effect, says James, comes straight from hell itself. Describe a time that you saw or experienced the damaging power of the tongue.

6. Let’s look at another passage of Scripture that reveals what Christ has to say about the importance of our speech. Read Matthew 12:33-37.

- a. According to Jesus, where does our speech stem from (vs 34)? _____

- b. Give examples of speech that would be found in a person who is good, meaning that person is “excellent in character, upright, honorable; one who is empowered by God to do what is right through faith”. _____

- c. What kind of speech will be evidenced in a person who is evil, meaning a person who is “rotten, corrupt, and pain-ridden?” _____

- d. Jesus says in verse 33 that “the tree is known by its fruit.” What does this mean and how does it relate to our speech? _____

- e. Jesus gives a very sobering statement in verse 36. He says, “on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.” The word careless means “all unprofitable, pernicious, sluggish, thoughtless, and injurious things that are spoken.” How would your speech be different if you thought of this verse before you spoke? _____

- f. What would you say that your speech reveals about your heart? _____

Pray: Understand that our words are a demonstration of our hearts and our faith. When Jesus tells us in verse 37 that we will be justified or condemned on the basis of our speech, He means that our speech is evidence of what’s really in our hearts. It will give testimony to whether or not we have been changed by the Spirit through faith, like evidence used in a courtroom that either convicts or absolves a defendant. *Write a prayer to the Lord. Continue to ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to areas of your speech and heart that need His transforming power. Then confess your dependence on Him and thank Him for walking with you to produce a mature and complete faith in your life.* _____

DAY 4

Pray: Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” As you study today, ask the Lord to reveal His grace to you that it may overflow into your speech.

Memorize: Fill in the blanks. James 2: ____: But _____ will say, “You have _____ and I have _____.” _____ me your _____ apart from your _____, and I will _____ you my _____ by my _____.”

Study: This week we have been learning about maturing faith evidenced by pure speech. So far we have seen that our tongues have great power to direct our lives. Today we will look at another analogy that James gives for the tongue, as well as how we can bring the tongue under the control of the Spirit. Begin by reading our passage for the week, James 3:1-12. Today we will focus on verses 7-8.

1. Fill in the blanks from verse 8.

The tongue is...

- a. a restless (unrestrainable) _____
 - b. full of _____
2. The word poison means, “venom, an arrow, specifically the poison of asps under their lips.” The picture we see of the tongue is that of a venomous snake. How could our tongues be used like venom and what kind of damage would that indicate we can do to others with our tongues?

 3. James tells us in verse 7 that though man has tamed many wild beasts in creation, “no human being can tame the tongue.” What does this indicate about our own power to control our speech? _____

 4. Do a heart check right now.
 - a. Do you believe that you have no power in yourself to control your tongue and use it as an agent of grace rather than an agent of harm? _____

b. Why is it important that we recognize our own inability to truly change our speech?

5. This passage may seem hopeless, but we know that though we cannot change our speech and our hearts, God can! There is hope in Him! Refer to Colossians 4:6. What kind of speech should be on our lips? _____

6. To live in a way where we are always able to speak with grace (meaning freely extended favor, kindness, joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, and loveliness), we must have the power of the Holy Spirit. Read Galatians 5:16. What does this verse say about how we can overcome the flesh (specifically our desire and propensity to use our speech for harm)? _____

7. To “walk in the Spirit” means “a habitual dependence on the Spirit, to keep in step with the Spirit.” Notice that we make a choice. We choose to let the Spirit rule in our lives, and by so doing we gain freedom over our flesh. MacArthur says it this way, “The Holy Spirit enables us as we freely choose to walk by His enabling.” What would happen in our lives if we were to choose to let the Spirit rule us every moment, specifically in the area of our speech? _____

8. What holds you back from allowing the Spirit to rule in your life this way? _____

9. One commentator says, “To gain new speech, we must not simply *abstain* from harsh speech, but *we should triumph over our old nature through the positive possession of the boundless resources of grace available through the Spirit.*” Isn’t it interesting that in order to speak with grace we must be receiving grace from the Spirit? How can we receive “the boundless resources of grace available through the Spirit?” (hint: if you’re not sure, take a peek ahead in James and look at James 4:6-9) _____

10. It's time for another heart check. How "seasoned" is your speech?

a. Would you say that your speech is filled with grace and that you are growing in grace-filled speech? _____

b. When or with whom are you most likely to speak graciously?

c. When or with whom do you tend to speak ungraciously?

d. How can you allow the grace of the Lord to transform you in those moments?

Pray: Think back to the analogy for the tongue that we looked at today. Picture that venomous snake coming under the control of the only one that can tame it, our Lord Jesus Christ. Tell Him now of your need for His grace in your life. By faith thank Him again that your speech is being transformed by Him alone as you walk in the Spirit moment by moment.

DAY 5

Pray: Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of building up, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Ask the Lord to open your eyes as you study today to specific ways that you can speak grace to others in your life.

Memorize: Write our verse for the week on the line below from memory. Then see if you can quote our entire passage.

James 2 ____: ____:



Study: James has been very clear about the power of the tongue in this passage. So far we have looked at how the tongue is like a bit, a rudder, a fire, and a snake’s poison. James is going to give us one last analogy to round out our thinking about the tongue. Read our passage, James 3:1-12. Today we will focus on verses 9-12.

1. Fill in the blanks from verses 11-12 to see the comparison that James makes.
 - a. Can a spring produce both _____ water and _____ water?
 - b. Can a fig tree bear _____ or a grapevine bear _____?
 - c. Can a salt pond produce _____ water?

2. What idea is James trying to communicate about our tongue using these examples? _____

3. James is using nature to make a point: what comes out of our mouths demonstrates our true nature. We would never expect an apple tree to produce peaches, and it would be absurd to go to the ocean expecting fresh water. In the same way, it’s foolish to think that if evil is coming out of our mouths towards others, we are living with a pure heart and faith towards God. What thoughts do you have about your own speech and heart as you consider James’ comparison?

4. Most of us would probably agree that we can easily bless, or speak well of, and praise God. The test comes when we begin to consider how we speak of others. To curse means “to doom, to speak evil upon, to express great loathing for, to speak with contempt or disrespect.”
 - a. Are there any people that you find yourself speaking about in this manner? (This could be a specific person or a group of people.) _____

 - b. What does it mean that we are all made in God’s likeness? _____

 - c. How would keeping in mind that every person has been made in God’s image change how you speak about and to every person you come in contact with, both believers and unbelievers? _____

5. Refer back to the verse we started with today, Ephesians 4:29. It gives us some specific ways we can use our speech for good. What are they? _____

6. We can see 2 specific ways we can use our speech for good in Ephesians 4:29: by using gracious speech and edifying speech. To use gracious speech means that our speech would give “joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, loveliness and favor” to those we speak with. To use edifying speech means that our words would give “constructive criticism and instruction that builds a person up to be the suitable dwelling place of God, i.e. where the Lord is ‘at home.’ ”

a. What are ways that you could intentionally begin to bless others in your life with gracious and edifying speech? Think about specific ways that you could bless your family, friends, and people you are with each day. _____

b. How would your relationships be different if you focused on speaking only what is gracious and what would build others up? _____

Pray: Take some time now to use the questions below to evaluate your own speech. Ask the Lord to show you what’s really in your heart and how He wants to transform your speech that it might be an indicator of the maturing faith He is developing in your life.

1. Which analogy of the tongue spoke the most to your own life and why? *Confess to the Lord your need for His help and grace in controlling your speech in this area.* _____

2. What does your daily speech indicate is actually going on in your heart? *Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the ways that He wants to transform your heart.* _____

3. How can you walk in the Spirit so that your tongue can come under the rule of the Lord? *Praise the Lord now that He’s the one who is perfecting your faith and bringing you to new levels of maturity.* _____