

Use Words Well > James 3:1-12

3:1-2 *The warning.* James uses those who would teach in the church as an example of how much self-control is needed, and yet how difficult it is to achieve.

3:3-5a *The influences.* The principle is that small things control larger things. This is seen in the examples of a bit in the mouth of a horse and of a rudder steering a large ship. James applies this truth to our tongue (i.e. our words): the words that we use to think and speak have vast influence over the course of our lives and of those around us.

3:5b-12 *The trouble.* The warning in all of this is that the tongue is impossible to control from a human standpoint! It brings about all kinds of havoc and harm and can lead – in the case of Christians – to massive hypocrisy when we worship God on the one hand and then use our words to cut down on the other hand. But, as James challenges us, Christians are called to faithfulness. We must learn to tame the tongue!

The Point: Christians are called to use our words well so that we would glorify Jesus.

Prayer: Father, to tame the tongue in our own strength is impossible. Thankfully, with you, all things are possible. Work in each of us through your Holy Spirit that we would increasingly use our words not to cut down, not to harm, but instead to build up others in Christ and glorify Your name!

Application: What practical step will you take to combat careless words in your own life this week?

Here is how I will apply these truths: _____
