

# **The Believer's Tongue**

## **Lesson #6**

### **James 3:1-4:12**

#### **The Tongue - James 3:1-12**

James has already established that faith of a true believer will be evident through a life of obedience, acting on that faith. He also states that a believer is to be quick to listen and slow to speak (1:19). James picks up that theme again as he writes about the tongue of the believer.

1. What is James' first warning? (James 3:1a)
  - Why? (James 3:1b)
2. After this warning, what does James remind his readers about? (James 3:2)
3. James illustrates the point he is about to make by referring to a horse and a ship. How does he say that a horse is made to obey? (James 3:3)
4. What does he say is required to steer a ship? (James 3:4)
5. In both of these illustrations something very small can move and control something very large and powerful. How does he relate those illustrations to the tongue? (James 3:5a)
6. His next point is prefaced by another illustration, this time by a small spark. What does James say a small spark can do? (James 3:5b)
7. How does he relate that illustration to the tongue? (James 3:6)
8. What amazing feat does James remind his audience that man has accomplished? (James 3:7)
9. But what has man not been able to do? (James 3:8)

10. Building on that theme, what does James say is so amazing about the tongue?  
(James 3:9, 10a)
11. What is James' heartfelt cry to these fellow believers to whom he is writing? (James 3:10b)
12. What final illustrations does he add to remind his audience of the consistency of nature?  
(James 3:11, 12)

**Reflect:** on what James has been saying about the tongue of the believer. If James were to write to you today, what do you think he would say about your tongue?

**Wisdom - James 3:13-18**

13. If someone is wise and understanding, how will that reveal itself to others? (James 3:13)
14. What if someone, "*harbors bitter envy and selfish ambition in their heart?*" (James 3:14, 15)
15. What does James say will happen if there are believers in the church whose lives are filled with envy and selfish ambition? (James 3:16)
16. Where does true wisdom come from? (James 3:17a)
17. Using James 3:17, 18:
  - How is true wisdom described?
  - What does true wisdom look like in the life of a believer?

**Wholehearted Commitment – James 4:1-12**

18. According to God's plan, true wisdom leads to righteousness and brings about a pure and peace-loving life. What does James say is the cause of fights and quarrels among believers? (James 4:1, 2c)
19. According to James, "*You do not have, because you do not ask God.*" What did Jesus say about this? (John 16:24)
20. What reason does James give if you ask but do not receive what you asked for? (James 4:3)
21. The key verse in this letter is James 4:4. Can you determine the problem that James was dealing with?
22. James' teachings are based upon those of Jesus. What had Jesus taught in Luke 16:13 relating to God and the world (money)?
23. Calling for his audience to commit wholeheartedly to God, what does James say the believer is to do? (James 4:7-10)
24. What is the benefit of committing oneself totally to God? (James 4:7, 8)
25. Returning to his theme of the tongue, what does James say the believer is not to do? (James 4:11a, b)

- Why? (James 4:11c)

26. James ends this section by reminding his readers that there is only one Lawgiver and Judge, which is God. What does he say God is able to do? (James 4:12)