

**Lesson Title:** Book of James - Chapter 3

Key Concept: James is action-oriented “wisdom literature” filled with good advice that reflects the teachings of Proverbs and Jesus. Chapter 3 shows that the tongue is uncontrollable, but not excusable; godly wisdom is attainable, but not through personal ambition.

**Scriptures:**

Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

(James 3:2 *New Living Translation*)

¹³ If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying.

(James 3:13–14 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: James 3; Luke 6:43–45; Philippians 4:8

**Lesson Thoughts:**

James chapter three has two main foci: the tongue and wisdom. And although they seem separate, a slow read reveals a correlation between how a person speaks and if they have godly wisdom.

James 3:2 states that if a person can completely control their tongue they are perfect, which implies that no one can do it. James 3:10–11 commands that it is not right for blessing and cursing to come out of the same mouth; even in nature sweet and salty water do not come from the same spring, nor does a tree naturally produce different fruits. Although the tongue cannot be tamed, a believer should be intentional with their words and not allow themselves to be controlled by their tongue. A believer must be vigilant in their effort to obey

newark united pentecostal church

scriptures such as Luke 6:43–45 and Philippians 4:8 and to not excuse themselves when the tongue produces fruit that is not of the Spirit.

In James 3:13–14 the wise person who understands God’s ways will exemplify it through their lifestyle, actions, and true humility. Verses 17–18 then refer to the pure wisdom from God which produces gentleness, a love for peace, willingness to yield to others, mercy, sincerity, good deeds, no favoritism, planting peace, and reaping righteousness. This type of wisdom is impossible without consistent restraint of the tongue and a conscious choice of one’s words.

James 3:13–14 also contrasts true wisdom with the person who claims to be wise but is jealous and selfishly ambitious. This kind of person tries to look wise through boasting and lying. Their willingness to falsely represent themselves demonstrates a release of control to their tongue as they pursue selfish ambition.

When our focus is truly on living a growing life submitted to God’s commands and directions, wisdom and the ability to restrain our tongue increase.

Conversely, when selfish ambition and pride infiltrate our heart, wisdom diminishes and our tongue is released.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) When is it hardest to restrain your tongue? Why?
- 2) What can you do to restrain your tongue when the situations from question 1 occur?
- 3) Share a time when you felt led of the Spirit to restrain your tongue.
- 4) How does growing in wisdom help you restrain your tongue? How does your speech reflect your growth in wisdom?

Next Lesson: Book of James – Chapter 4 (Do a slow read before the next lesson)

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Study Philippians 4:8. How can you apply this passage in your daily life?
- 2) In what areas would you like to grow in wisdom?
- 3) Before the next lesson in this series, do a slow read of James chapter four.