



March 11: James 3:1-18

1. The main topic of this passage is the evil of the tongue. Why do you think James starts the section with the exhortation that “not many of you should become teachers”? (Hint: if a lot of sinful people are aspiring to the same position in the church, what can be the result?)
2. Read verse 2. What does James think would be the hardest area of life in which to avoid stumbling?
3. In verses 3-5 James uses three examples to explain the power of the tongue, despite its physical smallness. What are the three examples? Explain James’ point in your own words.

4. What is the contrast James draws in verses 7-8? What is James communicating about the tongue?

5. Do you think the tongue deserves everything James is ascribing to it here? Does it really cause that much trouble? Why do you give that answer?

6. Why would somebody *boast* about having bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in their heart? Why would they confuse those things with “wisdom that comes down from above” (v. 15)? (Hint: if your heart is filled with bitter jealousy, you probably don’t recognize it as such; you probably call it “a desire for fairness” and insist on the wisdom of your position!)

7. Explain how a church full of jealousy and selfish ambition can collapse into disorder and vileness (v. 16).

8. Read verses 17-18 and notice all the words James uses to describe a person marked by wisdom from above. How are those things opposed to bitter jealousy and selfish ambition?