

our speech and our faith

James 3:1–18

Our Speech Demonstrates the Genuineness of our Faith (vv. 1–2).

We all speak, we all sin, and we all must take responsibility for our words (v. 1). Because speaking is so easy, it is often one of the last areas that our faith transforms (v. 2).

Our Speech is not an Insignificant Matter (vv. 3–12).

Little things can have a huge effect: for example, bits, rudders, sparks, and tongues.

- Little bits guide huge horses (v. 3).
- Little rudders steer giant boats (v. 4).
- Little sparks start massive forest fires (v. 5).
- Little words can be acts of incredible sinfulness (v. 6).

Our speech betrays our worldly hearts and affections (see chapter 4). What is worse, the human tongue cannot be tamed because it simply mirrors the sinfulness of the heart (vv. 7–8). The inconsistency of blessing God and cursing human beings whom God made demonstrates our sinfulness (vv. 9–12).

Our Speech Flows from our Beliefs — our “Wisdom” (vv. 13–18).

Godly wisdom is revealed by Christlike speech (vv. 13, 17–18).

- It is innocent—not containing sinfulness.
- It is peaceable—not provoking others to sinfulness.
- It is gentle—gracious and humble.
- It is open to reason—not prideful or stubborn.
- It is full of mercy and good fruits—a cornucopia of Christlikeness.

Worldly (godless) wisdom is revealed by jealousy and selfishness (vv. 14–15), which is a fountainhead of every kind of sinfulness (v. 16).