

## **Bible Study Group Notes**

### James 3

#### **THE BIG PICTURE**

James has been exposing the difference between appearance and reality in the Christian life: living faith, costly obedience, and practical love. In chapter 3 he turns to one of the most powerful forces shaping church culture – our words. James insists that speech is never neutral: it can either create a greenhouse where faith grows, or a furnace where faith is scorched. The question is not whether words matter, but what kind of wisdom is shaping them.

*Read James 3.1-18.*

#### **WHY LEADERS' WORDS MATTER (3.1–2)**

1. What warning does James give about becoming a teacher in 3.1?
2. What does James mean when he says teachers will be judged “with greater strictness”?
3. How does 3.2 (“we all stumble in many ways”) shape the tone – especially for leaders?

#### **WHY EVERYONE'S WORDS MATTER (3.3-12)**

4. What images in 3.3-6 show the power of small things? What do they each teach about speech?
5. Why does James describe the tongue in such strong terms in 3.6?
6. According to 3.7-8, why is “just trying harder” not enough to control the tongue?
7. What contradiction does James highlight in 3.9-10, and why does he say “this ought not to be so”?
8. How do the images of springs and trees (3.11-12) help us understand what our words reveal?

### **WHY WISDOM DETERMINES OUR CULTURE (3.13–18)**

9. How does James define true wisdom in 3.13? What does it look like in practice?
  
10. What marks “wisdom” that is actually worldly, according to 3.14–16? What fruit does it produce?
  
11. How is “wisdom from above” described in 3.17? Which qualities stand out to you?
  
12. What result does wisdom from above produce in 3.18?

### **REFLECT & APPLY**

13. In your experience, what kinds of words turn a church into a furnace? And what kinds help make it a greenhouse?
  
14. Are you more prone to discouraging speech, or to withholding encouraging speech? What might need to change?
  
15. What would it look like this week to speak one deliberate “greenhouse word” shaped by wisdom from above?

### **PRAY**

- Confess careless, cutting, or silent speech.
- Ask God for wisdom from above—pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy.
- Pray that your words, and the words of the whole church, would sow peace and reap righteousness.