Growth Group Lesson: November 4-5, 2023

Title: James: Do the Bible, Pt 6: "The Tongue Test" – James 3:1-18

Big Idea: The "tongue test" reveals whether we are receiving Godly or demonic wisdom in our hearts to direct the course of our lives.

What in the message stood out to you?
Read James 3:1-18. What questions do you have?

1. We will be judged by our words – James 3:1

Read James 3:1. Why do you think teachers will be judged with greater strictness? Why, then, should anyone want to become a teacher?

Read Matthew 12:36-37. Why do you think Jesus makes words the standard for judgment? Read the three verses that come before it (Matt. 12:33-35). How do they help you answer?

2. Our words REVEAL our hearts – James 3:10-12

Read James 3:10-12. How would you summarize the point of these verses?

Read Matthew 12:33-35 again. What are some things you observe in these verses? What do our words reveal about us?

How have you observed the contradiction of blessing God and cursing people in your life or the world around you? What does this reveal about a person's heart?

3. Our words DIRECT our lives – James 3:3-5

Read James 3:3-5. What is the significance of the illustrations of the bit and the rudder?

What contrary forces do the bit and rudder (and the tongue) need to overcome?

How is the tongue like a fire?

4. Our words IMPACT those who hear them – James 3:6-9

Read James 3:6-9. What are some things you observe in these verses?

Read Proverbs 12:18. In what ways can words hurt (curse) others? In what ways can words help (bless) others?

How have you been hurt by someone's words? How have you been helped by someone's words?

Read Provers 18:21. Why do you think words have such power?

5. We change by using our words to CONFESS – James 3:2a

Read the first half of James 3:2. What are some ways that you have "stumbled" with your words?

Read James 3:8. Do you agree that no human being can tame the tongue? Why or why not?

Read James 5:16. Why do you think confession of sin heals us and changes us?

6. We change by RECEIVING wisdom from God – James 3:13-18

Read James 3:13-18. Contrast the characteristics of earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom as described in these verses. How do these distinctions show up in today's society?

What are some examples of how you could demonstrate heavenly wisdom in the way you talk?

How would James' teaching on heavenly wisdom help to resolve conflicts in the modern world?

7. We receive wisdom from God through the Bible and Prayer

Read James 1:21 and James 1:5. What do you observe in these verses? What should we do in response?

Read Hebrews 4:12-13. The picture here is of a divine surgeon performing surgery on us using His word as His scalpel. How can we allow God to perform this surgery on us?

How would receiving the wisdom of God affect how we view ourselves, others, and God? How would this impact our words?

8. We change by using our words to WORSHIP! – James 3:9-10

Read Colossians 3:16 and James 3:9-10. What is the result of the Word of God dwelling in us? What would be the impact on us if we spent more time praising, blessing, and thanking God for who He is and what He has done?

"Next Steps" Takeaways – Discuss and pray through the following:

- With God:
  - Will you confess that you have sinned against God and others with your words?
  - Will you confess that you are powerless to change on your own?
  - Will you ask God to implant His wisdom in your heart through His word?
  - Will you spend as much time as possible praising, blessing, and thanking God for who He is and what He has done?
- With Others:
  - Will you ask forgiveness from those you have hurt with your words?
  - Will you take a "tongue test" this week in dependence on God?
    - DO NOT complain or grumble.
    - DO NOT boast about anything.
    - DO NOT gossip or repeat bad information about someone else.
    - DO NOT run somebody down, even a little bit.
    - DO NOT defend or excuse yourself no matter what.
    - DO always affirm other people.
- On Mission:
  - Will you use your words to pray for and share the Good News about Jesus with someone who doesn't know Him this week?