



THE BOOK OF JAMES

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week Three

Sermon Recap

What if your next sentence could literally bring life or death to someone's soul? Jacob Bales reveals how a simple "yes" or "no" carries crushing weight—from childhood crush notes to life-changing job emails—but warns that while we can tame wild animals, no human can tame their tongue without the Holy Spirit's help. Through James 3, he exposes how our words reflect our hearts and challenges us to surrender our speech to Jesus, becoming people of honest, life-giving words that build God's kingdom rather than tear it down.

Get Started

What's the most encouraging thing someone has said to you this week—even if it was something small?

Take It In

What encouraged and/or challenged you from the message this week? Why?

Talk It Over

Read James 3:3-8

James uses three illustrations—a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, and a small spark—to describe the tongue. **What do you think these comparisons teach us about the importance of controlling our words?**

Jacob explained that these small things (a 2-pound bit controlling a 1,000-pound horse, a small rudder directing a huge ship, a tiny spark starting a massive fire) all emphasize the theme of control and the disproportionate power that small things can have. **In what areas of your life do you struggle most with controlling your words—anger, gossip, dishonesty, or something else? What practical steps could you take to gain better control?**

Jacob emphasized how simple words like 'yes' or 'no' can carry tremendous weight and impact our lives. He shared examples of how encouraging words can lift us up while discouraging words can tear us down. **Knowing that your words have this same power, how can you be more intentional about choosing 'life-giving' words in your daily conversations with family, friends, or coworkers?**

Jacob mentioned that James says 'no one can tame the tongue' and that we need the Holy Spirit's help. **Why do you think controlling our words is something we can't do on our own?**

Read Matthew 12:36-37; Luke 6:45

Jacob taught that Jesus said we'll give an account for every 'idle word' we speak. **How does this challenge expand beyond just avoiding curse words to include things like gossip, lies, or angry speech?**

The sermon explained that biblical gossip is 'negative information shared behind someone's back with negative intentions' and mentioned that our social media posts are also extensions of our words that will be held accountable. **If you knew that every word you spoke today would be reviewed tomorrow, how might that change the way you talk about others, respond when you're frustrated, or post on social media?**

Jacob shared Luke 6:45: 'What you say flows from what is in your heart.' **If our words reveal what's in our hearts, what do your typical words and conversations reveal about the condition of your heart?**

Live It Out

Jacob suggested praying Psalm 139:23-24 as a heart check. **What would it look like for you to regularly ask God to 'search your heart' and reveal areas that need His healing or transformation?**

Pray and ask God to help us be mindful of the power of our words in daily interactions, for guidance and strength from the Holy Spirit to control our tongues (for building up rather than tearing down), and for wisdom to speak with honesty and integrity in all circumstances.