

**Would you rather...**

**Be heard or understood?**

**Would you rather...**

**Display your knowledge  
Or share your knowledge?**

**Would you rather...**

**Have the last word**

**Or help the other person?**

**Would you rather...**

**Win the argument  
Or the relationship?**



# FAITH AT WORK

A STUDY OF JAMES

JAMES 2:26

## Context – 1:2-3

- Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials [tests], knowing that the testing [proving] of your faith produces endurance.
  - Not simply *assurance*

## Context – 1:4

- And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect [mature] and complete, lacking in nothing.

# Context of the Book

- Whether He causes them or allows them, God uses trials to prove the nature of our faith in order to improve the strength of our faith



# Context of the Book

- Not: “This is how to know whether or not you have faith.”
- But rather: “This is how to know whether the faith you have is immature or mature.”

# James 1:19-25


Test #1: How do you respond to the Word of God?

- The immature hear and forget
- The mature hear and do (and grow more mature)

# James 2:1-13

Test #2: Is there any hint of distinction or favoritism in you or your church?

- The immature play favorites
- The mature love everyone and it shows



*Faith and Preaching*  
James 3:1-12

# James 3:1-12

- Test #3 – How well do you control your tongue?
  1. Teachers Need Bits (1-5a)
  2. Tongues Need Taming (5b-12)

# Teachers Need Bits

- Let not many of you become teachers
  - Application / conclusion
  - Quick to hear, slow to speak (1:19)*
    - Don't be too quick to say what you think, because ...

# Teachers Need Bits

- Judgment will be stricter for teachers (3:1)
- Judgment will be merciless for the one who shows no mercy (2:13)  
*Judged by the law of liberty (2:12)*

# Teachers Need Bits

- Judgment will be stricter for teachers (3:1)
  - In order to teach you should know
  - Knowing demands doing (1:22-25)
  - Judged by our doing (2:12)



# Teachers Need Bits

- For we all stumble in many ways
  - Explanation of the application
    - *We all*: universal (1 John 1:9-10)
    - *Stumble*: transgress God's law; sin (James 2:9-10)

# Teachers Need Bits

- For we all stumble in many ways
  - Explanation of the application
    - *Many ways*: the law of love is comprehensive (2:8; Rom. 13:8-10)

# Teachers Need Bits

- Why not let many of you become teachers?
  - Because many are not mature enough yet
    - Cf. Heb. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 1:3-7

# Teachers Need Bits

- How do we know who is mature?
- Look for the bit in his mouth
  - The mature man does not stumble in what he says (3:2)
    - Speech impediment?

# Teachers Need Bits

- Does not stumble in what he says
  - Tight rein on his tongue (1:26)
  - Godly self-control (cf. Gal. 5:22-23)
  - Dealing with his heart issues (Matt. 12:34 – *that which fills the heart*)

# Wisdom

- Proverbs 17:28 Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.

# Teachers Need Bits

- Does not stumble in what he says
  - If he can control his tongue, he can control his whole body
    - The whole horse (3)
    - The whole ship (4)

# Tongues Need Taming

- Tiny tongue (5-6)
  - Big Boasting - just as a little bit or little rudder has power to do big things, so the tongue has great power over the whole life



# Tongues Need Taming

- Tiny tongue (5-6)
  - Big Fire - useful or very destructive
  - Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

# Tongues Need Taming

- Tiny tongue (5-6)
  - The tongue allows itself to be used by hell to defile our bodies and disrupt all areas of life

# Wisdom

- Proverbs 26:20 For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.

# Wisdom

- Proverbs 26:21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

# Tongues Need Taming

- Wild tongue (7-8)
  - Better: *every nature of animal has been tamed by the nature of man*
  - Man exercises dominion over animals but not his own tongue

# Tongues Need Taming

- Unnatural tongue (9-11)
  - Bless God & curse God's image?
  - Fresh water & bitter water?
  - Figs & olives?
  - Salt water & fresh?

# Tongues Need Taming

- These things ought not to be this way
  - *Ought* – *it is necessary*; proper; appropriate; congruity
  - Such speech (9) is inconsistent with faith

## Ephesians 4:29

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.



# So What?

- What comes out of your mouth?
  - Cursing? Poison? Evil? Strife?
  - Praise? Blessing? Helpful words?
- How tightly do you hold the reins?
  - Do you think before you speak?

# So What?

- The tongue of the immature man runs wild and sets life on fire
- The tongue of the mature man is under control and produces fresh, healthy, and refreshing water

# So What?

- We ought to control our tongues
- The mature man controls his tongue
- But no one can tame his tongue
- What are we to do? (3:13-18)

*What comes out of your mouth?*