

**Transition:**

The average human tongue is only about 3 inches long and weighs just 2–3 ounces yet has the power to direct the course of our lives like a rudder steers a ship or a spark sets a forest ablaze. The power of the tongue is not just about speech; it's about spiritual maturity, self-control, and the wisdom that comes from heaven.

**Tell the story:**

Tell the story (with passion!) the best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story. Perhaps leave some parts out or make a mistake, just to see if your group catches it!

**Rebuild the story:**

Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story. Then have someone else tell the story the best they can – just like you modeled the first time.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. James compares the tongue to a rudder on a ship and a bit in a horse's mouth, both small but powerful. How have you seen your words either build someone up or tear someone down?
2. James contrasts earthly wisdom with wisdom from above. How does he describe each, and what key differences stand out to you?

**Fundamental:**

The tongue can cause great damage despite its small size. James 3:8 describes it as "a restless evil, full of deadly poison." Most of us have, at some point, gossiped, spoken harshly, complained, or used careless words. So, what's the solution? James points us to godly wisdom. He explains that there are two kinds of wisdom: one that is earthly, driven by envy and selfish ambition, and leads to disorder; and another that is heavenly, marked by peace, submission, and mercy. As believers, we're called to pursue this godly wisdom and to be peacemakers who sow in peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

1. James asks, "Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?" What do you think he means by this, and how does it relate to the way we speak?
2. Why does our speech matter so much in the Christian life?
3. What does it mean to be a 'peacemaker who sows in peace', and how have you seen that kind of life produce a 'harvest of righteousness' in your own experience or in someone else's?

**Homework/Challenge:**

1. Guard Your Words: This week, intentionally pause before you speak, especially in moments of frustration. Choose to speak life, encouragement, and truth.
2. Reflect on James' description of wisdom from above (James 3:17) and pick one trait, like peace-loving, gentle, or full of mercy, to actively use in your conversations and relationships this week.

**Discipleship Tip:**

Encourage your group to reflect honestly on their speech, helping them see that taming the tongue isn't just about self-control, but about heart transformation as they grow in Christ.

**Prayer:**

Lord, guard our tongues and fill our hearts with Your heavenly wisdom! Amen.