

James 2:14 James and Paul; brothers in the gospel

- 1) Do you think James & Paul were writing epistles against each other's teaching?
Why or why not?

- 2) Some have conjectured and taught that Paul and James were at odds with each other, they opposed each other and their relative epistles amount to nothing more than religious infighting. Where does this kind of thinking find its roots?

- 3) Why does it matter if Paul & James agreed with each other on justification?

- 4) How is a person justified or made right with God according to the apostle Paul?
 - a) Romans 11:6
 - b) Titus 3:5
 - c) Galatians 2:16
 - d) Romans 3:28
 - e) Ephesians 2:8-9

- 5) How is a person justified or made right with God according to James (James 2:21-24)?

- 6) How do the following verses help you understand what James is talking about?
 - a) James 2:14
 - b) James 2:17
 - c) James 2:19-21
 - d) James 2:26

- 7) How would you respond to a person who claims James taught salvation by good works?

- 8) James' and Paul's teaching on justification complement each other. How do their different perspectives help you understand salvation or justification?

- 9) What is the application of this to your life?

James 3:1-12 The Unruly Tongue LA

Monday (v.1-2) Isn't it interesting that James singles out teachers first? Why do you think that is? He is clearly talking about those who teach in the church. Part of the reason James singles out teachers is that teachers usually do a lot of talking. It is critically important that teachers in the church teach only what is right or correct doctrine (teaching). Notice though that James doesn't necessarily have simple doctrine in mind here. Rather he is talking about a use of the tongue that shows maturity. You could paraphrase it this way; if you are a teacher show that you are qualified to teach by demonstrating a mature use of the tongue. From a negative we might say; if you habitually use your tongue in an ungodly way you are disqualified to teach.

Tuesday (v.3-4) One of the reasons I love the book of James is that James uses wonderful illustrations. Today we have two fitting illustrations 1) a horse with a bit in it's (of all things) mouth and 2) a large ship which is easily turned by a small rudder. How does this help you understand how your whole body might be controlled by such a small thing as your own tongue?

Wednesday (v.5-6) Isn't the Bible a masterpiece of literature? We wouldn't expect any less, it is God's Word. The little tongue "boasts great things." A tiny fire (envision a match or cigarette) can light a huge pile of wood on fire. The people in south Florida or Southern California know something about this. Every year fires devastate huge plots of trees and homes. You know when those wild fires are lit they are very hard to extinguish and most of the time the damage is irreparable. In the same way, once the words are out of your mouth there is no way to reel them back in. You can only go forward and deal with the devastation. Does this help you understand the awesome power of your words (tongue)?

Thursday (v.7-8) James gives us another illustration – the taming of animals. If you think about it that really is an awesome thought. God has placed mankind in a role of dominion on the earth. We have (by God's design) been able to tame or subdue any kind of animal. How is it then, that mankind has been unable to tame or subdue his own tongue? It would seem from our accomplishments that it is not for lack of ability – we have been able to tame some powerful animals (lions come to mind). It must then be that most people have a lack of desire.

Friday (v.8-10) Notice that the book of James is full of what I like to call "illogical inconsistencies." This one is obvious and awesome. How can you use your tongue on Sunday morning to sing loud praise to God, or during the week to witness what a great God we have & serve then the rest of the time use that same tongue to curse, back-bite or run down men (people) who are made in God's image. That is totally illogical! Not to mention sinful. "My brethren these things ought not to be so."

Saturday (v.9-12) James continues the masterful use of illustrations. He is now using contrast and comparison to help us see the illogical inconsistencies in our lives. Blessing is contrasted with cursing, a spring giving both fresh and polluted water a fig tree bearing olives and a grape bearing figs. In the created order the things which James mentions do not happen. What does that tell you about using your tongue to tear down? James tells us to examine our "spring" if you owned a well that poured out undrinkable water, would you still try to drink from it on certain days? Probably not, because you know that the water is undrinkable. Do you see how it is illogical (and sinful) to use that which was made to praise God to hurt and run down those who are made in His image?