

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Words & Wisdom

February 1 & 2, 2020

Because words have tremendous power, and because none of us can tame our tongue, not many should seek to instruct others. James even says that teachers will be judged more strictly. What incredibly relevant words in an era when so many people recklessly give advice, tweet their opinion and post their viewpoint. Those of us who speak need to pursue wisdom.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: JAMES 3:1-18

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

If what comes from our lips is mostly negative, judgmental, critical or false, we need to question why we have not experienced more transformation, becoming more like Jesus in our words and attitude. Those of us who speak (and that's almost all of us!) need to pursue wisdom. Wisdom is applied knowledge. It's seeing the world as God sees it and responding as God would respond. Being sinful human beings, we'll also "blow it" with our words. No one can tame the tongue. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't watch our words and ask for wisdom.

Jesus taught that the words we speak come from the overflow of our heart (Matthew 12:34-35), and Jeremiah teaches that the heart is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9). Ultimately, we don't have "word" problem; we have a heart problem. We are in need of a new heart, or a cleansed heart (Psalm 51:10; Ezekiel 26:36). The wisdom that James describes flows from a transformed life (Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). So, before we "spout off" all sorts of advice and opinions, playing the role of teacher, we would do well to tend to the transformation of our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When is the last time your words got you in trouble? What happened before, during, and after?
- What practices have helped you "tame" your tongue?
- Do you think the text applies to all of us, even though it is directly aimed at teachers? How?
- What connections do you see between words and wisdom?

APPLICATION: This week, work on taming your tongue. Take a pause before you respond to someone. Spend more time listening and less time talking. And spend some time in the Bible—God's Word is our ultimate source of wisdom!