

James

By Chantel Bink

Like Hebrews, James discusses faith and reminds us that we need to live out our faith through our actions. Using hands and feet to work isn't the only **type of action, though; James tells us that how we communicate is just as important.** James writes not just to one person but to "the twelve tribes"—whether this means Jewish Christians or Christians in general we don't know, but to me this screams, "EVERYONE." There is not one chapter in the book of James that does not explain how we need to listen and speak.

"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires" (1:19-20). **Gulp. Convicting? Maybe just for me, but those words are tough to take in. I'm certainly not slow to become angry, and if you have ever had a conversation with me you know I'm not slow to speak either. Despite my shortcomings, though, James says again in Chapter 2 verse 12, "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful." Merciful in both actions and words.**



In chapter 3, James goes even further and states that the tongue is a "restless evil, full of deadly poison" (8b). I can't imagine one person reading these words has not been hurt by the words—or lack of words—of another right here in our own church, in the same way I can assume that all of us have spoken words—or not spoken words—that have inflicted wounds. This is not okay. "Out of the same mouth come praise and

cursing. My brothers, this should not be" (3:10).

James continues this idea later in the chapter saying, "...wisdom from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (3:17). Those are the type of words that should be coming out of our mouths. We should "not slander one another" (4:11) or "grumble against each other" (5:9). We are family. Don't get me wrong, being a family, we are not always going to agree, we aren't all going to be BFFs, we aren't even going to go together like "ramma lamma lamma ka dinga da dinga dong" all of the time. It's a part of life; but we are a family and **we still love each other and should therefore pray for and build each other up. If you are serving in the church in every way you can and using your God-given gifts to build it up, but you're gossiping about and picking on your brothers, what kind of testimony are you are giving the world?**

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" James 5:16

So, I'll leave you with this thought: How are you going to use your words to testify your faith to your church family and the world today?

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