

STUDY 3. NOTES FOR LEADERS

1. a. Can you remember saying something that “just popped out”, or a “whoops” moment? What were the implications?
- b. What has been the nicest thing ever said to you?
- c. What has been the most damaging thing ever said to you?

2. See Proverbs 10:20, 31,12:18-19, 15:4, 17:4,18:21, 21:23

10:20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value (NIV).

10:31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cur out.

12:18-19 Hash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying longue lasts only a moment.

15:4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

17:4 A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.

18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eats its fruit.

21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.

- a. These and other verses from Proverbs refer to the tongue. Which one to you is the most striking?
- b. Why do you think, in a book of wisdom, there are so many verses about the use of the tongue?

3. Taming the tongue!

- a. What is your reaction to swearing?
 - i. I let fly now and then.
 - ii. Some words I will use and some I will not use.
 - iii. I never swear.
 - iv. I have to be worked up before I would swear.
- b. Why do Christians generally back away from using bad language?

Much swearing relates to sexual behaviour or genitals and therefore is abuse of the bodies that God has given us. Some is related to God and is abuse of his name.

Jews thought that if they used the name of God, or of Heaven, then their oath or promise had greater veracity. They believed that if their oath was not prefaced by such language, they could be excused from the implications of what they had said. Jesus in Matthew 5:33-36 says that we are to be people of truth and should not need such oaths in order to be believable.

4. Read James 3:1-12.

- a. James says that teachers (and the use of their tongues) will be judged by greater strictness. Is that fair?
- b. “No one can tame the tongue?” Do you agree? Haven’t we all had times when you have held your tongue when you really have had so much that you wanted to say?
- c. Have you ever been a victim of a crazy rumour? How did it start? What do such rumours teach us about the dangers of the tongue?

a. Teachers in the period that James was written were those responsible for the regular preaching in the church and had the task mainly of building up others in the faith.

5. **Read Matthew 12:36, Colossians 3:8-10, James 1:21, 3:10, 12, 4:1-2.**
- a. How does your mood or emotional state affect what you say? If you are feeling “grumpy” do you go quiet? Do you verbalize your anger?
 - b. When you say something that you later regret, what do you do about it?
 - c. Imagine you are angry about something and want to tell the person who has made you angry how you feel. How should you use your tongue?
 - i. Say nothing.
 - ii. Tell the person exactly what you feel?
 - iii. Let the issue go.
 - iv. Try and find a way to say it without damaging your relationship.

Refer to James 1.19.

6. **See James 3:10 and I Thessalonians 5:11.**
- a. Has anyone encouraged you lately?
 - b. Have you encouraged anyone yourself?
 - c. Is there anyone in your group that needs encouragement?
7. As a group pray that God may help you use your tongue to create good rather than harm, to encourage rather than destroy, to avoid the world of gossip and rumours and to control our anger from saying things that harm relationships.

O God, May we use our tongue to honour you, to praise you and so make a positive difference to our world.