

JESUS' BROTHER, CHALLENGES OUR HEARTS

Talk 5 – Do you take God seriously? – James 3:1-4:10

Small group questions

Leaders – if the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer – please contact bishop@bathurstanglican.org.au

1. What resonated with you from the message, or was there something you found challenging or unclear?

Section 1: The Tongue: Cursing or Praising (James 3:1-12)

2. James discusses the contradiction of praising God and cursing people with the same tongue. Can you think of situations when this contradiction has occurred in your life?
3. Explore Luke 6:45. If we speak from out overflow of our hearts; how do we address the real issue when it comes to our tongues?
4. Share an example from your life when you've seen a change in your speech as a result of a change in your heart.
5. Do you think the "THINK" acronym (True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind) is a useful tool in guarding our speech? Will you use it?
6. In what ways can our words be used to build others up and benefit those who listen, as mentioned in Ephesians 4:29?

Section 2: Wisdom: From Within or From Above (James 3:13-18)

7. According to James, what are the characteristics of wisdom from above? What are the surprising ways wisdom is seen in someone's life?
8. How does it contrast with earthly wisdom?
9. How does the fear of the Lord and shunning evil lead to humility and good deeds in the wisdom James describes?]
10. Mark said: if you fear God – if you take him seriously – you'll see it in your purity, your peace-loving, your consideration of others, your submissiveness to God, your mercy, your good fruit, your impartiality, your sincerity! Discuss.

Section 3: Friendship: The World or with God (James 4:1-10)

11. In what ways we flirt with the ways, values, and pleasures of the world over our relationship with God?
12. How do you react to James' statement that "friendship with the world is enmity against God"? What words of James' brother do theses remind you of?
13. Reflect on the idea of God's jealousy for our exclusive love.
14. Discuss the promises in James 4:7-10. How *can* we resist the devil and draw near to God in our daily lives?
15. Why does James tell us to grieve and mourn our sin, and purify our heart as we return to God?

Prayer idea – Pray for grace to reflect on the message, that we all make take God seriously – seeking his transforming work in our lives so that with our heart renewed, we will speak only what is helpful; know his wisdom from above and show it in our lives and actively resist the devil, but rather, draw near to God with sorrow for him and dependence on his grace.