



International Bible Lesson
International Bible Study Commentary
L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Words Unlike the Worldly
James 3:1-12

Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be (James 3:9-10—KJV).

With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way (James 3:9-10—NASB).

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be" (James 3:9-10—NRSV).

James wanted Christians to not only say they were Christians but also live like Christians. One way to live like a true Christian is to be careful how we use our tongue. We will all make mistakes with our tongue from time to time. But making mistakes as a true Christian is far different from using our tongue as those of this world use their tongue—as a weapon to destroy others in a variety of ways. Think of the damage done in the world by those of this world who do not use their tongue as James says Christians should use their tongue. Think of the damage done by those in places of worldly influence who tell lies whenever it suits their purposes. Think of the damage done by those who defame the character of others or mock others. When they attack someone with their tongue, they sometimes hope others will not think about any ideas other than their own. Some simply hate those who differ

from them. Those of this world do not praise God; instead, they curse those who do not agree with them. A Christian should never be seen as just another worldly person who curses or uses God's name to manipulate others. Everyone is made in the likeness or image of God; therefore, Christians need to treat people with the respect that Jesus showed others. Think: If Jesus would not say it, we should not say it.

Thinking Further

1. What reason did James give when he advised that not many believers should become teachers?
2. Name two things that James compared the tongue to that his readers would understand?
3. Where you live today, name two things that you might compare the tongue to that people should understand?
4. How can the tongue be compared to a small fire started in a forest?
5. How can the Holy Spirit make a difference in a Christian's life?