



## Conversations On Who We Are Becoming

### Week 4: Conversations about the words we use

#### Opening Questions

1. Did you have a nickname growing up? If so, what was it?
2. As kids we learned, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Is this true? Do you agree with the sentiment or not?

#### Opening Prayer

O God, our redeemer, rescuer, and friend: Come now and illuminate our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit. Help us today to take a step of growth in maturity as we seek to walk in the ways of Jesus. May we grow in the way we see other people, in the way we treat other people, in the way we listen, and in the way we speak. In Jesus' name. Amen

#### Scripture

Read James 3:2-12 slowly and out loud. Read it twice if that is helpful.

*For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.*

*How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of*

*nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.*

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. What are some of the verbal mistakes you have made? (Remember we all make mistakes from time to time in the words we use.)
3. Small things make a big difference, things like bits, rudders, and small fires. What other examples like these in James 3 can you think of?
4. Why do words have the power to hurt so much and cut so deeply?
5. What steps can we take to rein in our words particularly when we are angry, agitated, or frustrated?
6. What would it sound like if we turned our words of blame and accusation into words of comfort and healing?

### **Final Questions**

1. Pause for a moment of silence. Where do you sense God at work at this moment? What is God inviting you into? What is God whispering to you?
2. Many of our verbal mistakes are due to poor habits of communication. What is one new verbal habit you can put into practice this week?