

## James 2:24 – 3:12

English Standard Version (ESV)

1   <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by  
2 faith alone. <sup>25</sup> And in the same way was not also Rahab the  
3 prostitute justified by works when she received the  
4 messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup> For as  
5 the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart  
6 from works is dead.

7   **3** Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers,  
8 for you know that we who teach will be judged with  
9 greater strictness. <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. And  
10 if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect  
11 man, able also to bridle his whole body. <sup>3</sup> If we put bits  
12 into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide  
13 their whole bodies as well. <sup>4</sup> Look at the ships also: though  
14 they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are  
15 guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the  
16 pilot directs. <sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it  
17 boasts of great things.

18 How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup> And  
19 the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The  
20 tongue is set among our members, staining the whole  
21 body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on  
22 fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile  
23 and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by  
24 mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a  
25 restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless our  
26 Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are  
27 made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup> From the same mouth  
28 come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things  
29 ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the  
30 same opening both fresh and salt water? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree,  
31 my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs?  
32 Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

**Read the passage through completely before looking at these questions.**

### **Observation (What does it say?):**

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Circle the symbols or pictures for the tongue.
- Underline the symptoms James describes for the different symbols.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

### **Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

After observing the passage:

- What are the connections (if any) between the end of chapter 2, the beginning of chapter 3, and the long section about the tongue?
- Why does James use so many different images for the tongue?
- What advice or commands does James offer about dealing with the tongue?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

### **Application (What does it mean for me?):**

- What is your biggest challenge in “bridling” your tongue?
- Which of James’s images (if any) would be the most helpful in controlling your tongue? Why?

**For additional thought and discussion:**

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

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## Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

### **Observation** (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

### **Interpretation** (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

### **Application** (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.**  
**J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

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For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see

Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

James 2\_24 – 3\_12.docx