**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview: Poison is the thing that kills growth. It comes in all shapes and sizes. In relationships, Poison is what ruins healthy relationship, connection, and community.**

**Week Overview: Tongue Twister – words have weight and meaning. We can use them in helpful or harmful ways. We will examine a passage in James that guides us to see the potential poison our words can have.**

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

Think about being weighed down with words. Holding dumbbells, wearing a weight vest, carrying luggage. All while sharing a personal story of a time when words affected you in a poisonous manner

**Tension (what’s the struggle):**

Ask the question: have you considered the weight and power that your words have? Both towards yourself and others

**Text**:

James 3:1-12

**THP: Tongue Twister (more of a theme) \*\*could look for better sentence\*\* ?Tame your Tongue?**

**Supporting Points:**

Proverbs 18:21 MESSAGE

Proverbs 16:24 ESV

**Application (call to action)**:

Use words of truth towards others whenever you can.

Use words of truth to yourself and your story.

The words we use have tremendous power.

A person can speak many words a minute and several thousand an hour.

The truth is, we all have problems with what we say.

If you just did a quick search on the word ‘words’ specifically in Proverbs, you would probably marvel at some of the results. Ooo marvel, that’s a good word.

\*\*Personal Story and Intro\*\*

\*\*Creative piece of words as baggage\*\*

Who all remembers the phrase ‘sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me?’

Yeah, whoever that person is, I wanna have some words with them! (Get it)

But for real, if we’re all honest with ourselves, we’d be crazy to think that’s true! Words are a huge deal. They bring life/death, they bring purpose/meaning, and ultimately, they can be poison in any relationship.

The words you say to yourself and others matter. They matter to God and they should certainly matter to you.

Even as you’re listening to my words right now, I want you to think about the last time you intentionally used your words for a “good” purpose. Then, I want you to think about the opposite. Which was easier?

If it was easier for you to remember a “good” use, awesome, I’m proud of you. But don’t just tune out.

If the opposite was true, it’s all good, I’m glad you’re here. Let’s work on this together and allow God to rid you of the poison of harmful words

\*\*There are soo many examples I want to put here as a parent of a toddler (book: 100 words)\*\*

The Message puts Proverbs 18:21 like this – “Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit—you choose.”

These words are about as close to perfect in terms of helping us examine our words in light of our relationships.

They are poison. Or they are fruit. You choose.

Everyday, you and I speak thousands of words. Some are carefully planned and selected; others are spoken impulsively. Some are spoken quietly; others are spoken with more volume. Some of our words are spoken with the desire to help and encourage; some with the motivation to hurt, belittle and retaliate. However, most of our words are spoken with little, if any, thought about how they will affect others.

Some of the ways we use words as poison are disguised as things like gossip, slander, or sarcasm.

Did you know the Bible is full of words? God’s words. If you want to hear God speak, read the Bible out loud.

The Bible has lots to say about words, in fact, if you did a quick search on the word ‘words’, you would be fascinated about the power and the design behind them.

There is probably no better passage for us to study on words as poison, than what we find in James chapter 3. \*\*MAIN POINT: TAME YOUR TONGUE?\*\* OR WATCH YOUR WORDS

James speaks to us about the importance of every word we speak. For each word will make an impact. In verse two he says, “For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” Every one stumbles and stumbling is embarrassing. It is our tongue that can reveal the condition of our hearts.

James makes three observations about the tongue.

First, the tongue is small but powerful (vv. 3-5) The tongue is small in proportion to the rest of the body, but it can do great things. James uses three images to make his point.

* 1. The image of a Horse and a bit – just the small bit controls the whole body
* 2. The image of ships – a very small rudder can steer the whole ship
* 3. The image of a fire – takes one spark to ignite a great forest

The words you and I speak can have a powerful impact on the lives of others. Just a few words, just a spark, can cause years of heartache. The tongue is small but powerful and…

Secondly, the tongue is small but dangerous (vv. 6-8) First, in verse six James compares the tongue to fire. “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature;”

We need to never underestimate the power of the tongue to do harm. Ask God to help you guard what you say. David prayed in Psalm 141:3, "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth: keep watch over the door of my lips." The Lord has to give you the power to control your tongue.

The tongue is small but dangerous and…

Third, the tongue is small but revealing (vv. 9-12) James not only tells us that we sin by what we say, but that what we say reveals how sinful we are. In verse nine he says, “9With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.”

It should bother us that we can be praising God one moment and in less than an hour we can be cursing someone for something so silly. We should listen carefully to ourselves and then we should determine to do something about what we hear. In verses 11 and 12, James compares our tongues to a fountain and fig tree. James draws no conclusions from his illustrations, because the conclusions were so obvious. What James is saying is that the tongue only reveals what is at its source. It takes us all the ways back to Proverbs 18:21, our words can be poison or fruit.

Will you \*\*TAME YOUR TONGUE/WATCH YOUR WORDS\*\*

Simple trick of THINK before you speak.

Is it true?

Is it helpful?

Is it important?

Is it necessary?

Is it kind?

Instead of using words to hurt, lets use them to heal.

Instead of using words to discourage, lets use them to encourage.

Instead of using words to tear others down, lets use them to build people up.

Instead of using words as poison, lets use them as fruit and point people to their purpose.

With God’s help, we can do this students. LETS GO!

Nathan: I think this is also a really powerful topic. Students may not realize how our words are poisonous to other people and ourselves.

I think you can help other people see the power of poison by helping students see the poison other people have spoken to them... something like “Sometimes, we don’t think about what we actually say...but, can you remember a time when someone said a joke, someone made an offhand comment, or maybe someone said something and you just took it the wrong way, and it sunk into your soul... for me, one example is: …...” “But, how many times do we send the poison instead of just taking it on?”

Another verse that comes to mind is Luke 6:45 where it talks about “from the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks” . You could say something like “What comes out of us is a sign of what is in us. What do the words coming out of us say about the condition of our heart? What do the words coming out of us say about the poison inside of us?”

It just draws the connection that it’s poisonous to both us and those around us.

Love the practicality of James and questions to ask yourself to THINK before talking...I know I could use more of this, as well in my life. Thanks for your work on week 2!

Scott: Love it man! Such a challenging and important topic! A couple thoughts...

Take captive every thought. We tend to speak off the cuff and in the moment rather than filter our words. Goes along with the THINK acronym.

Don’t bother praising me if you’re throwing shade at my kids. If someone is horrible to either of my boys, they have no chance of pleasing me. We forget sometimes that we’re all children of God. While God is infinitely more loving and gracious than I am, the heart of a father says that the best way to love me is to love my kids. The best way to hurt me is to hurt my kids.

Positive gossip! Who doesn’t love to hear when people speak good about them! What if we looked for opportunities to spread positive gossip about people, both behind their backs and to their faces! “So and so said that you’re the most genuine person they know!” “He is such an honest guy, you can trust him with anything!” “You couldn’t find a better friend than her!” The challenge isn’t to not talk about people anymore. The challenge is to change the narrative and always speak life. Added bonus: people will love you for it!