



## WEEK 4 DEVOTIONAL

### **WORDS FROM THE WISE | Applying the Practices that Lift People Up**

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#### RECEIVE

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Take a few moments to read James 3:3-18. Read it slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully. Read it in such a way you believe the Holy Spirit is trying to speak to you through it. When you have done this once, pause for a few moments of silence and then read it again in the same way.

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#### REFLECT

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1. Of the four “verbal balloons” touched on in the message, which one means the most to you when OTHERS demonstrate it toward you? Why is this?
  - Encouragement
  - Empathy
  - Forgiveness
  - Listening
2. Which of the four above-mentioned communication patterns would the people who know you best say they’d be grateful to see YOU attach to the kite-string more often?

3. Drawing on the definition of the spirit of wisdom supplied in James 3:17, describe what you think it looks like for somebody to speak to another in a way characterized by the following words. Journal an example of each. This week look for opportunities to live into a spirit of wisdom by using what you journaled to season your conversations.

- Pure
- Peace-loving
- Considerate
- Submissive
- Full of mercy and good fruit
- Impartial
- Sincere

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### RESPOND

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4. Who do you know that seems particularly good at embodying this kind of wisdom in the way they speak? What do you notice or admire about them? Take a moment to bless and encourage them by sending them a note, text, or email of thanks and appreciation.

5. Think of a relationship with which you sometimes struggle significantly. Which of the characteristics in James 3:17 do you need to ask God to infuse you with further? Take a moment to talk with God about this and journal what you believe is a practical way to open your heart more to God to allow this infusion to happen.

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## RESOURCE

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This is a [great short video](#) based on a talk by Brené Brown, to help us visualize what empathy really means.

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## SCRIPTURE

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**James 3:3-18** | New International Version <sup>3</sup>

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup>Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. <sup>5</sup>Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup>The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

<sup>7</sup>All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

<sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

## Two Kinds of Wisdom

<sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

<sup>14</sup> But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup> Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

<sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup> Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.



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