**TWO TESTS OF GENUINE FAITH:**

**TAMING THE TONGUE + WISE CONDUCT**

**JAMES 3**

**I. Genuine faith produces a controlled tongue. (James 3:1-12)**

 A. Words matter! (Gen. 1)

 B. Teachers beware (James 3:1-2a)

 C. Sins of speech— Adam and Isaiah (James 3:2b)

 D. Control your tongue, control your whole self. (James 3:3-5a)

 E. Tongue as fire (James 3:5-10)

 F. The sin of inconsistency (James 3:10-12)

**II. Genuine faith produces wise conduct. (James 3:13-18)**

A. Ask for wisdom and you shall receive. (James 1:5)

 B. Solomon’s wisdom (1 Kings 3)

 C. Wisdom from above vs. wisdom of man (James 3:13-16)

 D. Virtues of human wisdom (James 3:17-18)

**Excerpts from *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Book of Proverbs* (Timothy Keller and Kathy Keller, 2017), pp. 194-195**

“A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.” (Proverbs 11:13)

“To be *gossip* a statement does not have to be false. It can be true information about someone that should have been kept in *confidence*. Gossip then is negative information that may or may not be true, designed to make the speaker and the hearer feel superior to the object of the gossip. James 4:11 says, “Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another.” The verb “slander” here simply means to “speak against.” It is not necessarily a false report, just an “against-report”—one that undermines the listener’s respect and love for the person being spoken about. Proper evaluation is gentle, guarded, well meant, and always reveals the speakers’ belief that they share the frailty, humanity, and sinful nature of the one being critiqued. It always shows a profound awareness of your own sin. …..Because the human heart is driven by self-justification, gossip is almost irresistible. (Prov. 18:8). Because it is highly contagious, the wise quarantine it by not repeating it and by avoiding the company of tale bearers. Gossip is listed in Romans 1:29 as one of the sins of a people or person who has chosen to worship idols rather than God. It is no minor thing.”

A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends….A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much. (Prov. 20:19). Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.(Prov. 16:28; 26:20).

“Gossip is devastating to relationships. It separates close friends when the kind of intimate information that close friends know about one another is shared with others….Gossip also keeps quarrels going within communities. When two people are at odds, they can speak to each other directly and make things right. Gossip complicates that. John might be trying to reconcile with Tom, but he won’t be able to do it if John’s friends also keep gossiping against Tom, thereby inflaming Tom’s friends, who in turn slander John. It is much harder to reconcile large groups of people to one another when they are talking about something in which they are not directly involved. Gossip is like cancer to the body of Christ.”

*Prayer*: “Lord, how deceptive gossip is—to the gossiper! I want to warn, I want sympathy and to sympathize, I want a good laugh, and these are all excuses I use to hurt other people’s reputations. Help me recognize gossip when I am doing it (or hearing it) so I can turn from it. Amen.”