



Daily Verse and Comment

James 3:11-12

(11) Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?
(12) Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?
so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

King James Version

In examining ourselves, perhaps the critical question is, "How much salt can be in the water before it tastes salty?" If our words hurt or cut others down only on occasion, does that make us guilty of all that James describes? How much confidence would we have in the kitchen faucet if we never knew whether we would receive salt water or fresh water from it? Would we fill a glass and drink it down or carefully test it each time?

When I was in school, a common practical joke was to dump salt in someone's milk or water, watch him unsuspectingly drink it down and chortle gleefully when the shock emerged on his face as he discovered what he had just consumed. When it happened to me, it was indeed a shock! No matter how many times I had watched it done to another, or participated in doing it, or how hard I laughed at another's "getting it," when my turn for a "salting" took place, it was totally unexpected and *entirely* unpleasant.

It happens like this in our relationships. We expect to trust one another, and we expect the "waters" of our words to be refreshing, to be pleasant, to be loving and positive. When we are hit with the "salt"—words spoken in anger, [gossip](#), merciless criticism, or caustic sarcasm toward us when we may need some kinder attention—it is always a shock and always leaves us feeling distaste in our mouths and betrayal in our hearts.

All of us are capable of all these kinds of communication. We have to ask ourselves: Do I send both fresh and bitter water from my mouth? Does my tongue produce both figs and olives?

— Staff

To learn more, see:

[Are You Sharp-Tongued? \(Part One\)](#)

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