



[James 3:11-12](#)

(11) Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? (12) Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

New 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"—wordsspoken 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

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for James 3:11-12 (<http://www.theberean.org>)

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

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