

JAMES

Lesson 15: The Tongue (3:1-12)

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1-2 Those in a position of leadership or authority are going to be accountable to God for the things they say. The words of a leader influence other people, therefore leaders will give account for any false speaking (Hebrews 13:17).

God will correct and discipline the believer who offends with the tongue. He will not condemn the true believer (Romans 8:1).

When you speak before people, they will be offended by something you say (vs 2), which will cause them to condemn you through criticism, gossip, confrontation, nitpicking, etc.

When you get to the place where you no longer offend others by your words, you will be a finished product ("*perfect*," verse 2). The tongue is the most difficult thing to control in our lives.

LITTLE THINGS

Vs 3 A powerful horse can be controlled by a very small piece of metal in his mouth, called a bit.

Vs 4 A great ship can be turned with a very small helm.

5-6 Our life and other people's lives are affected by our tongue, a "**little member**." One word ("a little fire") can set the whole congregation on fire, turning people against one another.

"**The tongue is a fire.**" Just as a tiny match can burn down a whole forest, the tongue can destroy an entire congregation.

The tongue is "**a world of iniquity.**" There is no limit to the sins that can be discussed, described, or talked about using the tongue.

The tongue "**setteth on fire the course of nature.**" The things we say can lead us back to our old sinful carnal worldly behaviors which we left when we got saved (Ephesians 2:2-3).

The tongue "**is set on fire of hell.**" When you participate in the hellish conversations of the ungodly, you are getting a taste of hell. Filthy conversation will do great damage to your relationship with God (2 Peter 2:7).

The spoken word is powerful. The Devil uses it in music and conversation to try and steer you towards his devilish ways. God uses the spoken word to save souls (1 Cor. 1:21, Mark 16:15, Romans 10:17).

7-8 Man can tame wild animals, but he can't tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil that can cause great damage.

9-10 The tongue is capable of blessing and cursing. God said, “**it ought not so to be.**” (See Matthew 26:69-74 compared to 16:16).

11-12 It is not possible for a fountain to be the source of sweet water and bitter water. How is it possible for a man to speak sweet words and bitter words? He has two fountains (two sources). The sweet fountain came from Jesus Christ (John 7:38, Exodus 15:25). The bitter fountain is inherent in our old nature (Romans 7:18). When we quench the Holy Spirit, we plug up the sweet fountain.

WHAT SHOULD THE TONGUE BE USED FOR?

1. Bringing peace to men (Proverbs 15:1, 26).
2. Giving wise reproof to those in the wrong (Proverbs 25:12, 28:23).
3. Delivering lost souls from death (Proverbs 11:9, 14:3-5, 14:25, 12:6)
4. Teaching people the things of the Lord (Proverbs 15:7, 16:21, 16:23, 20:15).
5. Carrying the good news of the gospel (Proverbs 25:25).

SOME SINS OF THE TONGUE:

1. **Lying** (Proverbs 10:18, Acts 5:3, Proverbs 12:18, 19, 14:25, 17:4, 19:5, 9, 20:17, 22:15).
2. **Talebearing** (Leviticus 19:16, 1 Timothy 5:13), tattlers, busybodies. A talebearer reveals secrets (Proverbs 20:19), kindle fires (Prov. 26:20), and destroy friendships (Prov 17:9).
3. **Talking too much** (Proverbs 12:13, 18:6-7, 6:1-5, 10:19, 14:23, 15:2, 17:27-28). Too much talking will lead to trouble (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7). The more you talk, the more likely you are to say something you shouldn't say.
4. **Talking too soon** (Proverbs 18:13, 18:17, 10:19, 15:28, 25:2, James 1:19). Don't speak to give opinion or pass judgment until you have all the facts and consider your answer fully. This is a matter for prayer (Psalm 141:3).
5. **Flattery** (Proverbs 26:28, Job 17:5, Proverbs 29:5, Daniel 11:21, Romans 16:18, Proverbs 20:19).
6. **Quarreling** (Proverbs 29:22, 12:16-18, 26:21). Quarreling makes matters worse, not better. We need to learn how to give a soft answer (Proverbs 15:1, 25:15)

HOW TO CONTROL THE TONGUE: Work on your heart condition (Mark 7:18-23, Matthew 12:34).
