



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

TO: *LEGISLATORS / SPOUSES*  
FROM: *DAN FILE*  
DATE: *MARCH 30, 2010*

**COLORADO**  
*James 3 Introduction*

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*God does not want us to be deceived about the genuineness of our faith. The truths found in the second chapter of James can make us uncomfortable personally or it can make us wonder if others we love are really true believers. Why does James go to great lengths to show how true faith works? A living faith **must** express itself in good works and they demonstrate the reality of that true and living faith. You can never separate good works from true faith. If that faith is true and genuine, it will be demonstrated by active obedience whereby I submit my heart, my will and my life fully to Him. James is so concerned that we are not deceived about the genuineness of our faith and that we possess the right kind of faith. God wants us to be assured beyond a shadow of a doubt that just as the body has no life apart from the indwelling spirit and is a useless, dead corpse, so also a faith without works is a useless and dead faith. And if that's the kind of faith you have, don't be deceived, you are not a true believer in Jesus Christ. Yours is a dead and lifeless faith, powerless to save, vain and useless. May we count the cost and live a life of courage and commitment as we fulfill our commission of bearing fruit that pleases Jesus Christ. And in that great privilege of service, may we find the abiding joy of intimacy with our Lord whereby He calls us friends! There can be no deeper relationship and no greater fulfillment than this. For this is a true and genuine life of faith that works!*

## I. THE TONGUE REVEALS THE HEART - JAMES 3

James insists that a living faith must be revealed by a demonstration of good works. There is no place where we can see the relationship between faith and works demonstrated more clearly than in a person's speech. Our speech, our words reflect what's in our heart and controlling the tongue is a matter of the heart. Christianity is a doctrine that must be lived out. The genuineness of one's faith will eventually be evidenced by one's speech. A faith that is real and genuine is able to bridle, control the tongue. A faith that is real will be seen by what the tongue talks about. We will all give account for every word we say.

## II. SCRIPTURE SPEAKS -

Scripture has much to say regarding the power of the tongue. The tongue can prove to be the greatest source of either enormous good or immense evil. Because speech has such a tremendous affect on its hearers, the tongue is quite possibly the key to self control for a virtuous life of faith.

In Scripture the tongue is described as wicked, deceitful, perverse, filthy, corrupt, flattering, slanderous, gossiping, blasphemous, foolish, boasting, complaining, cursing, contentious, sensual, and vile.<sup>1</sup> If you think back, even

the first sin committed involved the tongue as Eve invited Adam to partake of the forbidden fruit and then Adam blamed Eve. See what the following verses bring to light about the tongue and speech.

- Proverbs 10:20- *"The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver."*
- Proverbs 13:3- *"The one who guards his mouth preserves his life."*
- Proverbs 15:4- *"A gentle tongue is a tree of life."*
- Proverbs 18:21- *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."*
- Proverbs 21:23- *"He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles."*
- Psalm 34:13- *"Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit."*
- Psalm 39:1- *"I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle..."*

### A. MATTHEW 12:34-37

Jesus Himself said that a man's words reveal his character. Hear these words from Matthew 12: 34, *"...For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."* What is in the heart flows out. Good comes from a good heart and bad from a bad heart. Your heart reveals your character and your tongue reveals your heart. ***What does your tongue reveal about your heart?***

Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 12:36-37, *"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."* Your words will either justify or condemn you. ***Do your words justify or condemn you before God and men?***

### B. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10-16

2 Corinthians 5:10 says that we will all give an account for our deeds whether good or bad. That means that we will be held accountable for our words as well. In 1 Corinthians 3:10-16, Paul wrote, *"According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved; yet so as through fire."*

This verse clearly looks at our lives as believers. The foundation that is laid

<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, John, MacArthur Commentary on James. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg. 144.

in a believers' life is Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation that can be laid but Him. The church and all believers are the builders upon the lives of the foundations that have been laid through careful, faithful ministry, much of which is accomplished through our words whether teaching God's Word, sharing, praying with, comforting or encouraging. Paul describes many types of materials that can be used to build on this foundation; *"gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw"*. And there will be a day when we, the builders, will stand before God and be held accountable for our work here on earth. Keep in mind; our words are a huge part of our ministry to those who believe and those who do not. Our work, as true believers in Jesus Christ, will be judged by fire to determine our eternal reward. How does that *"fire"* affect different building materials that you use? Either it burns and consumes or it purifies. What we say is what we are building with. **What are you building with in the lives of other people? Is it wood, hay or stubble or gold, silver and precious stones?**

### C. PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

The Bible speaks about a day when, *"...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*(Philippians 2:11) One day, all people of every nation, language and tongue that has ever lived will acknowledge with their lips, with their tongue, with their words that Jesus Christ is Lord.

### III. JAMES SPEAKS –

The Word of God says much about the tongue and there is no other place in Scripture that deals with it so thoroughly than in the book of James, in particular chapter three. James shows what it means to have a faith that *"works"* in every aspect of our life. And he will speak to the issue of the tongue more strongly than any N.T. writer. In James, God has established that hearing the Word of God means obeying it. A real faith will be an active faith. True saving faith will be demonstrated, and it will be evident by what we say. James speaks of the tongue in every chapter. The genuineness of our faith will eventually be seen through our speech.

### A. JAMES 1-5

Many of the cautions James gives deal with words that are used. Our words have a tremendous effect on people. Take a moment to quickly review verses from James that deal with issues of the tongue.

- James 1:19-20- *"But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger."* Remember, James is referring to Scripture. We are to be quick to hear God's Word, slow to speak it making sure we are prepared and handle it accurately (2 Timothy 2:15), and self controlled.
- James 1:26- *"If anyone thinks himself to be religious and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless."* This clearly speaks to the emptiness of a man's religion if he fails to bridle his tongue.

- James 2:14- *"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works. Can that faith save him?"* This verse addresses a faith that consists of a *"talk"* but not a *"walk"*.
- James 3:9-10- *"With it we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing."* Revealing the inconsistency of the tongue.
- James 4:11-12- *"Do not speak against one another..."* Slandering one another with words, malicious gossip.
- James 5:1-6- Exposes how they were not only showing favoritism to the rich (James 2:1-8) but oppressing the poor.
- James 5:12- *"...but your yes is to be yes and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment."* Be honest in what you say.

### B. JAMES 3

In chapter 3, James begins a complete sermon on the significance and importance of a controlled tongue, man's inability to control the tongue, the power and vicious nature of the tongue, the inconsistency and dangers of our speech and the need for true wisdom in speech and life. There is no doubt this will be a challenging and convicting chapter.

A living faith is demonstrated by *"good works"*. Immediately James begins a discussion about perhaps the most difficult way that we will demonstrate true faith and that's with our words, our speech, *and our tongue*. And James will insist that a living faith will produce an inward change resulting in the development of self control. Self control is tested most readily by controlling the tongue.<sup>2</sup> And the righteous *"doer of the Word"* has a heart that is transformed by God and thus has righteous speech. A true believer that possesses a genuine faith is able to bridle their tongue and that tongue reveals a wisdom that comes from above. True faith will be demonstrated by the tongue under control.

### IV. HOW DO YOU SPEAK?

James talks about a faith that works. **Does your faith work?**

**How does your life, your words make your belief visible?** Watch your words for we will give an account.

A changed life will produce transformed living that begins with the heart. The heart reveals character and the tongue reveals the heart. **What do your words reveal?**

If you had a cup of water and that cup is bumped, what would it spill? **What is the cup of your heart filled with and what does it spill over with when it is bumped?**

The third chapter of James will challenge us to examine our hearts by examining our words. The control of our tongue is a matter of great importance to God and controlling our speech is a chief mark of a believer!

<sup>2</sup> Hiebert, D. Edmond, James. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 185