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## “The Tongue”

### Weekly Bible Study Schedule

**Tuesday, March 5, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #5**

(hot breakfast provided)

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James 3:1-12 uses a series of illustrations of the power of tongue, and the danger when uncontrolled.

**3:1 - Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.**

Followers of Jesus, before you become too eager to teach, understand the expectations of the teacher. The privilege to teach the Scripture comes with accountability for words spoken, whether in the pulpit, in the public, or in the private.

The way some of you speak and live would place you in jeopardy of greater accountability, than if you did not teach. All are accountable for our words and life, and the teacher to a higher standard because of their spiritual influence, and direction they lead people.

**3:2 - Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.**

We all make mistakes. Teachers make mistakes, listeners make mistakes, and plenty of mistakes are on our side of the ledger. To stumble is to walk unsteadily. James honed-in on the tongue, the part of our body that makes the lion share of mistakes. If it was not for the tongue, we would be whole. The controlled tongue unifies the body, soul, and mind. The faltering tongue divides the intention for wholeness. The disciplined tongue aligns one to move in the same direction at the

same time. The uncontrolled tongue introduces chaos. Rather than a unified body, the out of control tongue produces rogue words and actions. We are all fractured people.

James supports his teaching with three illustrations: the horse, ship, and speech.

### 1. The Horse

**3:3 - We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth.**

A horse bit is a round bar usually made of metal or a synthetic substance. The two purposes of a bit: to control the movements of the horse in the direction the driver wants to go, to communicate with the horse. The bit is language to the horse, the bit tells the horse what to do.

The small controls the large. Notice the juxtaposition between large and small, horse and bit. The average horse weights about 1000 pounds pending breed. The lightweight bit controls the heavy weight horse.

### 2. The Ship

**3:4 - And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong.**

Notice the juxtaposition between large and small, rudder and ship. The rudder is the primary control surface to steer the ship. The rudder controls the direction of the ship, and the pilot controls the rudder. Not even the prevailing winds withstand the rudder.

Point is the small tongue has the power to control the destiny of the individual. When a person can control the tongue, it indicates they can control other areas of their life. When the tongue is uncontrolled, most likely, areas of life are going sideways.



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### 3. The Speech

**3:5 - In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.**

The boosting is not arrogant in this verse rather; James highlights the power the small tongue has to direct a person’s life.

*There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18*

The point is destruction happens quickly. In minutes, words can heal or hurt.

A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. Proverbs 16:27

**3:6 - And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.**

The body has 206 bones, 600 muscles, 78 organs, and 7 systems to list selected sections, and then, there is the tongue. James locates the tongue in a world of unrighteousness. The natural bend of a broken world is toward corruption. Among all the muscles in the body, the tongue expedites the conflagration of sin in one’s life.

*It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person...But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. Matthew 15:11, 18-20*

**3:7-8 - People can take all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the**

**tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.**

Can wild animals be tamed? What about the Lions? What about the Tiger? An experiment some years ago called, the “Russian fox farm”, discovered how many years it took to produce domesticated foxes.

*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Genesis 1:26*

Can the tongue be tamed?

**3:9-10 - Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!**

It is not natural to curse someone made in the image of God, when you worship the God that created the human imagine. Praise vs. Cursing. Single-minded vs. Double-minded. Pure Heart vs. Impure Speech. Truth vs. Lies. Do not speak from both sides of one’s mouth is field-level teaching.

**3:11-12 - Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can’t draw fresh water from a salty spring.**

Only a transformed heart can produce fresh water.

Only the work of the Holy Spirit is our hope for change.



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Missouri

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