

## JAMES 3 TAMING THE TONGUE

So far the book of James has been about testing and taming, has it not? We learned to be thankful for the trials because they work to mature us. Chapter one taught us how to tame temptation by:

1. Considering God's **judgment**
2. Considering God's **goodness**
3. Considering God's **Divine Nature Within**

The second half of chapter one was about taming our flesh and being "DOERS" of the word... NOT hearers only.

Chapter two was about how to treat rich men SOUTH of Richmond....We are to treat every soul as a "Whosoever" and NOT respect the rich more than the poor. We tested our hearts a bit last week by considering the homeless community living just outside our doors, didn't we?

If those chapters were difficult, Buckle up! Today we are taking on one of the most dangerous of ALL of God's creations – THE TONGUE!

**James 3:1** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

- **Guzik** - James has a sober admonition for those who would **become teachers** in the church. They must take the responsibility seriously, because their accountability is greater and they shall **receive a stricter judgment**.
  - Chuck Smith taught that those of us CALLED to teach and preach cannot shut up! BUT... We teachers know that we will be judged for how well we represented the Lord when we DID teach!
    - When Lynette and I move to Prescott AZ in a few weeks, I will immediately look for an opportunity to teach and preach. It is what I am and what I am called to do. **But, I will be careful...**

2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. **NLT** -

**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.**

- Teachers and Preachers, Counselors, Therapists, and Church Leaders need to be VERY careful when we give advice and teach the Church of Jesus Christ!
  - Where the Bible is silent, we too should be... BUT... Where the Bible speaks clearly, we too should teach simply and clearly and lovingly!
- At the end of his life, Chuck Smith often told us all to **“Simply teach the Word of God, simply!”**
  - SO... At Calvary Chapel, we teach through the Bible, verse by verse. We teach every verse. We leave our opinion in the background as much as we can and teach what the Bible says. “More Bible... Less You!” Chuck Smith taught us.

## **THE TONGUE – THE BIT, THE RUDDER, THE FIRE, POISON**

3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

- I am NOT a horse rider, but I have Google... AND I have Martina who is a rider, horse owner, and a good friend. She tells me that there are hundreds of different kinds of bits to use – depending on the rider mostly, the horse, and the relationship between the horse and rider.
  - 15 Months ago, she rescued a Mustang who had been trained by inmates in Nevada. After only a couple of Months Martina and Silver were fast friends.
    - Martina tells me the goal is to use the softest bit you can and guide your horse with YOUR eyes and intent. IE, Your horse gets to know you and wants to please you.
      - Isn't that what WE WANT too with our Lord?
- Look – He can guide the hard way, or the easy way. It is up to you...

## **RUDDER**

4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

- What percentage of the ship's weight do you suppose the rudder is? A fraction, right?

- SO... our tongue weighing only a few ounces can make our lives peaceful, or it can create shipwrecked relationships, careers, and friendships, or lack thereof!
- You probably have friends whose words are a constant source of encouragement and joy... I DO!
  - AND... You might know people who are difficult to be around because they are “Debbie Downers...” or Eeyore’s... Complainers... IF they would take advice, I would offer this: Keep your thoughts and words kind ones, encouraging ones, and loving ones!
- Words, like golf scores, are better when there are less!
  - Less... is more. **Proverbs 10:19** In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips *is* wise.

## **FIRE!**

5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

- How many relationship fires have our little tongues started? HOW I wish I could go back over the 65 years of my life and take back words that I let escape my lips...
  - Like campfires... Just a little thought can prevent a disaster. At Family camp, we do not just stand up from a fire and go to bed... Our firefighters properly douse the flame AND the coals.
    - When THEY go to bed, that campfire is no danger.
      - How I wish I could have been that careful with my tongue all of my life! **LISTEN...**

6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. **YIKES!**

- **COURSON** – “What can we do to keep our tongues from being ignited by the fires of hell? In Acts 2 we read of another tongue of fire, one which led to worshiping and witnessing. Therefore, I suggest that the more time we spend praying in the Spirit, the less time we’ll spend preying on others with our tongues.

- Where no wood is, there the fire goes out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceases.—**Pro 26:20**
- When you hear gossip, pray silently in the Spirit to keep your tongue busy lest you join in the hellish discussion. If I listen to gossip, to put-downs, I am actually an accomplice in that fire ignited by hell. But if I refuse to listen and pray instead, the water of the Spirit douses the fire of hell, and the conversation dies."
- **The tongue can also be used to encourage and to assure love.**

## UNTAMED TONGUES

7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

- Have you seen the tames tigers, lions, and Killer Whales? Have you been to see the birds of prey that fly right over your head at the command of their trainers?
  - One of our College students is involved with the Animal Training classes at MIT (*Moorpark In Town*) Her Mom posts pictures on FB of Alexandria feeding man-eaters!
    - We can even charm snakes.... BUT...

8 But no man can tame the tongue. *It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

- I own two pump sprayers. One I use for bug spraying, the other I use for cleaning my camper. I NEVER use the bug sprayer for the camper... AND I NEVER put poison in the sprayer for the camper! **EVER!** Why Not? That would be gross! Listen...
  - I am committed to not losing my temper and saying things that I cannot take back. When I am angry, I get quiet... HOPEFULLY!
    - I want my words to be a blessing. **Like this...**

9 With it (***Our tongue***) we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. **NLT - Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers**

and sisters, this is not right!

## BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY

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.

- Have you ever bought a beautiful looking bunch of grapes, apples, berries, or fruit... and then when you got them home they were bitter or rotten? MY WIFE... Takes them back!
  - BUT... NOT before being disappointed... Offended... And bummed out!
    - OH! brothers and sisters in Christ, PLEASE! Let us be committed to keeping our thoughts and words humble, sweet, loving, wise, AND FEW!
- Know WHAT we need? **Listen...**

## WISDOM FROM ABOVE

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

- **COURSON** - Come to terms with the fact that if your words are bitter, it's because your heart is bitter. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks ([Mat 12:34](#)). Bitter words come from a bitter heart.
  - **In rebuking religious hypocrites, JESUS said in Matthew 12:34** Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
    - **SO...** This means that MY words reveal what is in MY heart.
- I have heard that the true test of servanthood is how you react... How you feel, after being asked to serve in some menial task.
- I remember as a young 20-year-old Youth Director feeling offended that I

had to go to training to run the Church's printing press; an Addressograph Multigraph 1250.

- I mean I was a College Graduate!
- BUT... It came in SO handy over the years to help me get side jobs to help ends meet. AND, guess what? One of the side jobs I am applying for in Prescott is doing what?
  - Stay Humble My Friends... Our trials are God's training room!

## PURE HEARTS

14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

- Four times a day, I use a lancet to produce a drop of blood on my fingertip; then I draw that drop into a meter that displays exactly what my blood sugar is. Then I get to calculate how many units of insulin will be in my next shot.
  - I often lay in bed at night thinking about what words came out of my heart that day... They started in my heart and made their way through my lips... Then I calculate where my heart is before the Lord... Then I pray for forgiveness and promise Him I will do better tomorrow.
    - Worldly wisdom says that "I am number one" But ... V17...

17 **But the wisdom that is from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

I WANT peace!

I WANT the fruit of righteousness!

I WANT to be a peacemaker with God, With Lynette, With you.

**LORD, make us peacemakers!**