

## How to Live the Christian Life

### “Taming the Tongue”

#### James 3:1-12

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**INTRODUCTION:** A true Christianity is seen in how you “walk”!

\* But it’s also seen in how you “talk”.

\* James has pointed out that a Christian is:

\* Patient in trouble – Chapter 1

\* Practices the truth – Chapter 2

\* In Chapter 3 – “Has power over their tongue!” (*Tongue means speech*)

\* Just as our “deeds” are evidence of our “faith”, so also are our words!

\* Jesus said (Matthew 12:34) – “*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*”

\* Our words reveal what is in our hearts!

\* The tamed tongue is a mark of maturity!

\* And only God can tame the tongue! (See v8)

A careless word may kindle strife

A cruel word may wreck a life.

A bitter word may hate instill

A brutal word may smite and kill

A gracious word may smooth the way

A joyous word may light the day.

A timely word may lessen stress

A loving word may heal and bless.

**James warns us of: The “Power of the Tongue”, and the “Problems of the Tongue”**

### **I. The Power of the Tongue** (vv1-6)

\* James points out two powers that lie in the tongue!

#### A. The Power to Direct (vv1-4)

1. A warning about teaching (v1a)

a. Everyone wanted to say something – “Teach”

2. The Reason's for the Warning (vv1-2)
  - a. A stricter judgement (v1b)
  - b. We all stumble (v2)
 

Illustration: Isaiah 6 & "Peter"
  - c. Only Jesus never sinned. 1 Peter 2:22 - "Who did no sin, neither deceit found in His mouth."
3. Two Illustrations (vv3-4)
  - a. Horses (v3)
  - b. Ships (v4)
    - i. So the power of the tongue to direct!
 

Proverbs 18:21 - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."
4. The good use of our tongue!
  - a. To praise God!
  - b. To pray!
  - c. To proclaim the gospel (April 22, 1855 – Edward Kimball & D.L. Moody)
  - d. To comfort and encourage

## B. The Power to Destroy (vv5-6)

- 1 The bad use of our tongue:
  - a. To lie
  - b. To slander
  - c. To curse – Ephesians 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication..."
  - d. To back bite
  - e. To flatter
  - f. To criticize (Parents!)

*Only a word of anger,  
 But it wounded on sensitive heart;  
 Only a word of sharp reproach,  
 But it made the teardrops start;  
 Only a hasty, thoughtless word,  
 Sarcastic and unkind,  
 But it darkened the day before so bright,  
 And left a sting behind.*

- g. To gossip
2. The tongue can be our strongest "asset", or our greatest "liability".

## II. **The Problems of the Tongue** (vv7-12)

\* Three problems!

A. It's Untamable by Man (vv7-8)

Romans 3:13-14 *“Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”*  
(Un-saved man!)

Psalm 140:3 – *“They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips.”*

B. It's Inconsistent (vv9-10)

Illustrations: Contrast church;  
You are driving, praising God and...;  
Little girl, arms around father's neck!

C. It's Contrary to Nature (vv11-12)

1. The tongue displays what you really are!
  - a. The fruit of our lips finds its source in the root of our soul.

## CONCLUSION:

### **How can we tame the tongue?**

**1. “Be Born Again” (a new heart)**

**2. “Be Filled with the Spirit”**

Ephesians 5:18 – *“Speaking to one another...”* A new power!

**3. “Be Cautious”**

Ask, is it: \*True?

\* Kind?

\* Necessary?

**4. “Be Prayerful”**

Psalm 19:14 – *“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”*