



THE EVIDENCE OF A
GENUINE FAITH

PURSUING WHAT
MATTERS TO GOD

The Taming of
your Tongue
James 3:1-12

The Taming of your Tongue

Sunday, October 25

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. – Prov. 26:20

I tell you, on the day of judgement people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. – Matthew 12:36 – 37

For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. – James 3:2

The tongue has no bones, but it is strong enough to break a heart. So be careful with your words.

Introduction:

In pursuing what matters to God, James writes of many evidences that accompany a genuine faith. Today (3:1 – 12) he addresses the importance of keeping a tight reign on our tongues. He has already mentioned this in Ch. 1:19 (*being slow to speak*), and in Ch. 1:26 (*bridling our tongues*). But in Ch. 3 he points to three lessons concerning our words and he uses six word-pictures to do it.

- A. The Tongue Acts as a Guide: Be Careful where it Takes you (3:2 – 4)
 - i. Bit put into a Horse's Mouth (3:2 – 3)
 - ii. Rudder used to steer a Ship (3:4 - 5)

- B. The Tongue is Restless and Unruly: Be Careful to Tend and Tame it (3:5 – 8)
 - i. Fire that sets a Forest Ablaze (3:5 – 6)
 - ii. Wild Animals that need to be Tamed (3:7 – 8)

- C. The Tongue always Bears Fruit: Be Careful to Bless and not Curse (3:9 – 12)
 - i. Water that springs from the earth (3:11 - 12)
 - ii. Tree that bears Fruit (3:12)



Study and Discussion Questions

James 3:1-12

Open It

1. If you could hear a tape recording of everything you said last week, what would you want to edit out?
2. What can you learn about a person by listening to him or her speak?

Explore It

3. If a person were never at fault in what he or she said, what would that show about the person? (3:2)
4. What is significant about the way we talk? (3:2)
5. What similarity does a person's tongue have to a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, and a spark of fire? (3:5)
6. What is so difficult about taming the tongue? (3:7-8)
7. In what ways are we inconsistent? (3:9-10)
8. What can a spring or a fruit tree teach us about speech? (3:11-12)

Get It

9. What motivates a person to teach others?
10. Why will God judge teachers more strictly than other people?
11. What are the ways we sin with our speech?
12. What practical advice would you give someone who wanted to control his or her tongue better?
13. In what times or places can your tongue be used for good?
14. How can you change your daily speech to reflect its importance in your life?

Apply It

15. What do you need to remove from your speech habits this week to make your words more pleasing to God?
16. What positive words do your family and coworkers need to hear from your mouth this week?