

## TAMING THE TONGUE

JAMES 3:1—12

### Introduction:

1. Ever get your mouth washed out with soap for something you said? Ever get slapped or spanked because you said a word you shouldn't?
2. Samantha and holy crap!!
3. Another theme of James: our **words**—slow to speak—keep a tight rein on tongue—words to rich and poor—speak and act as those who are going to be judged—the claims we all make.
4. In verse 1 James issues a warning/caution to people who were aspiring to be teachers **v.1** you will be judged more strictly
5. A teachers work is to use words—to instruct—inform—persuade--correct--discipline. A teacher uses words to instruct in truth/error.
6. How important is truth/error/doctrine in the church today? VERY-- “words shape our world”.
7. This passage is an illustration of Pr. 18:21—the tongue has the power of life and death.
8. Jesus gave the Pharisees some very sobering thoughts when he said: **Matt. 12: 33—37** Words are powerful. Words reveal what's inside us.
9. My goal in speaking has always been to rightfully divide the word of truth—my goal once was to speak so I was understood, but now my goal is to speak so I am never misunderstood. And such is never easy!! I have stumbled many times and in many ways.
10. In v. 2 James says that very thing: “We all stumble in many ways”. Yet he holds up the ideal of the **perfect man—the mature man** who is never at fault in what he says—the man who can keep his tongue in check is a man who is able to keep his whole body in check. **v. 2** First of all, lets consider this mature man

### I. THE MATURE MAN . . .

#### 1. A. Controls Himself and Therefore His Speech

1. To be faultless in what you say is not easy/quick to come

by . . . the reason being, we are speaking about self control.

2. Self-control—is one fruit of the H.S.  
The mature man—the Spirit controlled man will keep a tight rein on our tongue. The mature man is able to control his

speech because he is able to control himself—his heart—  
his mind—his will—his emotions.  
3. He is able to keep his body in check—under control.

1. James says in vs. 3—5

Notice then what

4. Bits, rudders and tongues—what is similar about them  
all? They r small in comparison to what they control.

3. help control/guide

5. What do bits and rudders do? They horses/ships.

6. Who controls the bits/rudders? The rider and the pilot—  
the implication? It is possible to keep ourselves under  
control by the H.S. Power. “If anyone is never at fault in  
what he says, he is a perfect man[a mature man who is . .  
.] able to keep his whole body in check.

7. Transition: James also vividly describes in **much more detail** the man who doesn't have internal controls and therefore isn't able to control himself **verbally.**

Here is the out of control man who will find himself in  
lots of danger!

## II. THE “OUT OF CONTROL” MAN OR WOMAN . . .

2. 1. himself and he doesn't

### A. Is A Man Who Boasts v. 5

1. The man who boasts is full of  
know it. When I was in college I met  
a young man—a  
star quarterback in high school—a  
good speaker—a  
personable young man who said to  
me one time—in  
his immaturity-- “stick with and  
you'll go a long

ways.” In my humble opinion, he was full of but one himself. (Roy Mays' comment to me)

2. Ac. 5:36—Theudas “claiming to be somebody”

3. Ac. 8:9—Simon the sorcerer—”boasted he was someone great.”

4. Pr. 27:2—Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”

### **B. Is A man Who Can Spark A Forest Fire**

1. Words can do major damage—many a husband demeans his wife and treats her like a doormat and vice versa—a wife by her words can disrespect her husband. Words can burn up a marriage.

2. False teaching in a church can lead many astray —Nick Elliot at Ben's church.

3. The political rhetoric that is going on in our country is inflammatory. It's not helpful to civil discourse. People are losing control of themselves and saying things that should never be said.

4. Many today are pushing an economic theory called socialism which will destroy the republic in which we live, if it takes hold. Listen—it is true-- “words shape our world”.

5. Wrong words out of mouths can damage others severely. Just like a forest fire. Therefore—be slow to speak!!

**The “out of control” man . . .**

**C. Is A Man On Fire v. 6 a “The tongue also is a fire . . .”**

going on inside a person. They may be pleasing and pleasant on the outside but on the inside be an angry person —ready to erupt like a volcano.

where elders have blown up—said things they shouldn't have and left the meeting. They were individuals who did not have themselves in check. Their tongue was like a fire—set to do damage. If you have ever been in one of those settings you say--

“What just happened?”

### 3. The “out of control” man . . .

#### **D. Is A Man of Evil v. 6**

1. What he says is never good.  
 2. Think about all the sins of the tongue —swearing--using God's name in vain —murmur--complain--idle words—vulgar words—lying—slander-- backbiting --unwholesome--foolish talk— a critical mouth.

#### **E. Is A Corrupt Man v. 6**

1. The word corrupt has the idea of staining something. If we are a person who is unable to keep his tongue under control we are leaving a stain in peoples minds that is not wholesome.

2. If you meet a Christian who has a vulgar mouth —that may well be what you remember about

that person. It stains how you view him/her.

### **F. Is A Man Whose Whole Life Is On Fire v. 6**

1. Difficult phrase to translate--  
“whole course of his life”--Adam Clarke  
suggests that James' use of this phrase intimates the circulation of our blood and illustrates it this way.  
2. Angry or irritating language has an astounding influence on the circulation of the blood; the heart beats high and frequent; the blood is hurried through the arteries to the veins . . . and an extraordinary degree of heat is at the same time engendered; the eyes become more prominent in their sockets . . . [and] the face is flushed. We have all seen this happen.

### **3. The “out of control” man . . .**

### **G. Is A Man Whose Speech Is Set On Fire By Hell**

1. Have we ever thought that by our words we become a mouthpiece for Satan?—Jesus and Peter—(Mt. 16:23) by our words we are accomplishing what Satan wants done and not what God wants. What a dreadful thought!

2. Transition: **3:7, 8** **The out of control man....**

### **H. Is Untamed v. 7, 8**

1. Sea World experiences of

putting bird on  
—taming of  
some things never  
Taming animals is  
tongue—and yet  
their trainer.

also blow up—we  
is too great and  
**always** keep  
and especially so  
excuse—it's just

back and throwing him up  
whales and dolphins—  
change in 2000 yrs.  
easier than taming the  
even wild animals return  
to the wild and maim/kill

2. The point being that we  
lose control—the pressure  
we explode. It's hard to  
yourself under control  
with our words. It's not an  
the reality!

### **I. Is A Restless Evil**

“looking for ways”  
find themselves  
spirited.

other peoples  
or gossip, giving

1. Describes one who is  
to create problems. They  
being critical and mean  
2. Sticking their nose into  
business; starting rumors  
off certain innuendos.

### **J. Is A Deadly Poison**

words of a lonely

1. The sweet seductive  
lover—Pr. 7:10ff

1.

2. Trans: **3:9—12** What's the point(s)  
James is

making? James is describing...

## **III. THE MAN WHO MAKES US WONDER**

### **A. The Proper/Improper Use of the**

## Tongue

1. The proper use is to praise and worship our Lord. The improper use is to curse men—to curse another individual made in the image of God. That seems to be pretty serious. To look down on another person that God has made and let's say you use terminology that condemns them to hell. This would not be right.

2. My experiences in a church bowling league with people who swore—what about their witness to non-Christians?

3. As we would imagine—James says this isn't right—this should not be. **Our words should be measured.** And in reality we, as Christians, should have our minds/will/emotions/habits under His Control.

4. I have struggled with how verse 11, 12 tie into the context—here is what I would suggest—as suggested to me by others.

5. The three questions he asks are rhetorical with a “no” answer intended. “nature has no confusion in her plans. . .” springs are either good or bad—fig trees bears figs—not olives, just like a grapevine bears grapes and not figs—just like a salt spring can't produce fresh water.

6. Nature for the most part is orderly—Genesis-- “after its kind” If a raccoon gave birth to a mountain lion it would be absurd—

unnatural--contrary to the  
orderliness of nature.  
7. If we praise God here  
and swear at home/ marketplace  
of life it would be  
absurd and unnatural—not what  
God ever intended. And  
when it happens and people  
hear are contradictions  
of praise and cursing it makes  
them wonder about  
what kind of person we truly are.  
It creates a paradox in  
their minds about our character.  
8. Is the fountain of our  
lips good or bad—fresh or  
salty?  
9. The Billboard of the  
Heart—Bob Russell

2.