

# How to Tame Your Tongue

Pastor Ryan Smith

If you could do three things (be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to wrath) you could improve any relationship. It was a bold claim.

Today's claim might be even bolder...

**If you can tame your tongue,  
you can master anything in your life.**

## James 3:1-12 NLT

<sup>1</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. <sup>4</sup> And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. <sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, <sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. <sup>10</sup> And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! <sup>11</sup> Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? <sup>12</sup> Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

**James says three things about the power of the tongue...**

## 1. My tongue determines my direction.

<sup>3</sup> We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. <sup>4</sup> And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong.

What I speak over my life and future is *more likely* to come to pass than the things I don't say. That does **not** mean that my words have magical, mystical power. Rather, it means that what I say out loud is further ingrained into my thinking and the thinking of the people around me.

There's a big difference between ***I'm going somewhere*** and ***I'm going nowhere***.  
Or ***I'll never find love*** and ***Love is bound to find me***.

Further, my words have **consequences**, both positive and negative.

## 2. My tongue can build up or burn down.

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

James says that my tongue starts a lot of **chain reactions**.

We can spread fear, hate, and anger.

We can also spread love and grace.

## 3. My tongue displays my character.

<sup>11</sup> Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? <sup>12</sup> Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

My tongue displays who I really am - my character.

Whatever is in the well comes out in the water.

### **Matthew 12:34 Amplified**

For out of the fullness (the overflow, the superabundance) of the heart the mouth speaks.

### **HOW TO TAME YOUR TONGUE...**

## 1. Renew your heart.

### **Ezekiel 18:31 Message**

Clean house. No more rebellions, please. Get a new heart! Get a new spirit!

**Let God have his way inside you and different things will come out of you.**

## 2. Use your tongue for praise and prayer.

### **Psalms 63:3 TEV**

Your constant love is better than life itself, and so I will praise you.

## 3. Use your tongue to repair and rebuild.

Speak life and truth into the world around you.

Speak the good news of the gospel into the world around you.

Have you confessed Jesus Christ with your lips? When you have faith in Jesus, your lips give expression to that faith in the form of confession.