

Do you have problems with your tongue? Do you speak to tear down instead of what is good for edification?

Technically, it is not a tongue problem. Did you catch that? We don't have a problem with the tongue. We have problem with our heart! According to Jesus, the mouth speaks what is in the heart (Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45). Solomon says, "*The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but the hearts of fools are not so.*" - Proverbs 15:7

What fills our minds will find its way out of our mouths. What fills your mind? Knowledge and wisdom from God or the wisdom and ways of the world? Worldly thoughts and worldly wisdom are Satan's domain. These are what drive jealousy, bitterness, anger, and destruction. They are poison to our souls. This is why James tells us that the tongue is set on fire by hell. He encourages you and I to seek wisdom from God. This wisdom is life giving and edifying, and when we speak, this is what will speak into the lives of others. Our tongue will be controlled, not by our own strength, but through the work of the Spirit who transforms our minds (hearts) through the washing with the Word, and causes us to speak God's overflowing love to the world.

DAY ONE

Last week, you focused on James 3:1-2. You briefly read verses 3-8 to see how they related to verse 2. Let's start our week by looking at these verses more intently.

1. After you begin your study time in prayer, read James 3 to refresh your mind and put you in context.
2. Go back and read verses 3-8. In these verses James gives some practical examples to help you understand the power behind something so small and seemingly insignificant. Take time to think through each of these examples by answering the following questions.
 - a. Explain the example in James 3:3. Draw a picture to illustrate what is happening. (Don't worry if it isn't a great picture, you will see something important if you do this.)

- b. Now do the same things for James 3:4. Explain it and draw a picture.
- c. Look at the pictures you drew. How big is the bit compared to the horse? How big is the rudder compared to the ship?
- d. What do these little things have the capability of doing?
- e. Read James 3:5 and sum up how the tongue directs and steers the body. Don't just restate the verse but explain how it works.
- f. According to the end of verse 5, what does the tongue have the power to do?
- g. Now read James 3:6. What is the tongue? What does it do? How does it do it?
- h. Read James 3:7-8. Man has been successful at taming so many things, why is he not successful in keeping the tongue under control?

3. Continuing his discussion on the tongue, James gives us another illustration. Read James 3:9-12 and in the space below, draw a picture of what he is saying. It can be one picture or several. By thinking this through and taking the time to illustrate this, you are processing this information and the picture you come up with will be imprinted on your mind for years to come. I can still close my eyes and see the picture I drew when I studied this book the first time about 15 years ago. I will give you plenty of room for your drawings below.

DAY TWO

1. You have seen the trouble the tongue can cause. In the introduction to this lesson, I mentioned that this is not a tongue problem, but a problem that comes from the heart. Read the following verses and notice how the tongue and the heart are connected. Record what you learn.

- a. Matthew 12:33-37

- b. Matthew 15:18-20

2. What do you have to control, in order to control your tongue?
3. Fortunately, James doesn't leave you wondering how you are to accomplish this taming of the tongue and controlling the heart (mind). In James 3:13-18 he shows you the solution. Read through these verses carefully and briefly record the main points that James makes. You will come back and look at each point in depth.
4. When you come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, you enter into a New Covenant. Before you go any further, it would be good for you to understand what happens in your heart (mind) when you enter this covenant. Read these verses and record what God does for each true believer.

- a. Ezekiel 36:26-27

b. Jeremiah 31:33

c. Jeremiah 32:39-40

d. John 7:37-39

5. Summarize what happens to your heart when you are saved (justified) by Jesus Christ and the Spirit comes in and sets up house. Prayerfully, carefully, and thoroughly work through this because without understanding this, you can't move on in your Christian walk!

DAY THREE

Seek the wisdom from above. The solution to taming the tongue is to control what you put into your mind? Let's see what James 3:13-18 teaches.

1. Read James 3:13-18.
 - a. According to verse 13, how do you know if you or someone else is wise and understanding?

 - b. Would showing his deeds have anything to do with what a person would say?

2. Verses 14-16 talk about jealousy and selfish ambition.
 - a. Where do jealousy and selfish ambition reside?

 - b. Where does it come from?

 - c. What does it do?

3. Verse 17 contrasts that earthly, demonic, natural wisdom to the pure wisdom from above. Record how this wisdom is described.

4. Take some time to complete word studies on the following words.
 - a. Pure

 - b. Peaceable

c. Gentle

d. Reasonable (easy to be intreated - KJV)

e. Full of mercy and good fruits (look at the words full, mercy, and good)

f. Unwavering (without partiality - KJV)

g. Without hypocrisy

5. How does verse 18 relate to what James has just said?

6. What have you learned this week about taming the tongue and living out your faith on a daily basis?

7. Check what the commentaries say about James 3.

DAY FOUR AND DAY FIVE

Your assignment for the next two days will be to complete your Observation Worksheets by working through a chapter study on James 4. The more times you can read through this chapter during your work, the better understanding you will have.