



James 3:1-12
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Taming the Wild Tongue

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NCCC

❖ The Position of the Tongue (3:1-2)

- People of influence (teachers) have more accountability.
 - We are accountable for our lives not matching our words—hypocrisy.
 - We are accountable for false teaching, lies, gossip, division, hurtful words.
- *We all stumble* yet have influence and therefore accountability in some manner.
 - *We all stumble* and we can all grow. Just as a teacher needs to learn to control the tongue, so we all do.
 - Controlling ourselves (self-control) for the sake of love is the goal not only for our tongue but for our mind and body.
 - Jesus' words to us all (Mat 12:37; 15:18). *Matt. 12:37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.*"

❖ The Power of the Tongue (3-5)

- Just as bits & bridles are used to turn horses, & rudders to turn ships, and so our words impact others' lives.
- As a spark start a forest fire, so words can destroy lives (ours & others).
- Evil words are often directed to control others or the world rather than controlling ourselves.
- Controlling our words is done both by controlling what we say & how we say it.
- Proverbs taught the power and importance of the tongue:
 - *Prov. 10:19 Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.*
 - *Proverbs 11:9 Evil words destroy one's friends; wise discernment rescues the godly.*
 - *Prov. 12:13 Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk, and so the innocent escape trouble.*
 - *Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but hard words stir up anger.*
 - *Proverbs 15:4 Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit."*
 - *Proverbs 16:24 Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.*
 - *Proverbs 18:4 A person's words can be life-giving water; words of true wisdom are as refreshing as a bubbling brook.*
 - *Proverbs 20:15 Wise speech is rarer and more valuable than gold and rubies.*
 - *Proverbs 25:18 Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow.*
 - *Psa. 141:3 Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.*
- The early church knew the influence of the tongue:
 - *Col. 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so*

- *Titus 3:1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.*

❖ The Poison of the Tongue (6-8)

- Words are the cancer of sin, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
 - *Prov. 12:18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords,*
 - *Matt. 15:11 What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."*
- Words can advance the agenda of hell itself.
- Wild animals have been tamed but not the unruly tongue.
- The tongue remains wild & full of poison and must be tamed.

❖ The Potential of the Tongue (9-12)

- We decide to bless or curse, by how we speak to others.
 - *Prov 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*
- Let's be the conduits of blessing. A kind, gentle, loving, truthful tongue is the mark of a Christian. *From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things* (Prov 12:14).
- A transformed life leads to transformed words, which leads to transforming others.

Transformed words advance both the truth (Gospel) & nature (love) of God.
*Eph. 4:15 Instead, speaking the **truth** in **love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

❖ Taking It Home

- Read through the verses above. Be honest, how tamed is your tongue? Who do you speak against? How negative are you? Do people trust you to not tell others?
- What are the ways our tongues advance the kingdom of hell? (Think gossip, division, what we choose to talk about and what we fail to talk about; think how and when we talk). Dare to ask others about how you're doing. Is your tongue tamed?
- Why are we so good at talking about what's wrong in the world? What does it mean to truth it in love (Eph 4:15).
- What would need to change if your tongue were to be tamed?
- How might Jesus' kingdom advance more if your tongue was tamed?
- Begin each day by offering your whole body to Jesus as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2). Ask God to show you a person and an encouraging word to bring them.