

A Practical Study of JAMES: The Battle of Our Behavior

SESSION #6: James 3:1-12

"Strive for Tongue Control"

Key Verse:

3:2 For we commit many sins. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a fully developed man able to hold in check also his entire body.

Memory Verse: James 3:5

TEXT:

v. 1 Stop becoming many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation.

v. 2 For we commit many sins. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a fully developed man, able to hold in check also his entire body.

v. 3 Now if we are putting bridles in the mouths of the horses, in order that they may be obeying us, we are also guiding their whole body.

v. 4 Behold, also the ships, though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, are being guided by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman leads it.

v. 5 So also the tongue is a small member and it is boasting of great things.

v. 6 And the tongue is a fire, the sum total of iniquity. The tongue so presents itself in our members, staining the whole body, and is setting on fire the course of existence, and is being set on fire by hell.

v. 7 For every creature, wild animals and birds, reptiles and sea creatures, is being tamed and has been tamed by human kind.

v. 8 But the tongue no one in the human race is able to tame; a restless evil, full of death-bringing poison.

v. 9 With it we are praising the Lord and Father; and with it we are cursing men, who have been made in the likeness of God.

v.10 Out of the same mouth is proceeding blessings and cursings. My brethren, it is not necessary that these things keep on happening.

y.11 The spring is not pouring forth out of the same opening, the sweet and the bitter [water] is it?

y.12 A fig tree, my brethren, is not able to produce olives or a vine, figs, is it? Neither can a salt spring give sweet water.

Introduction:

In our study of James, with the subject **POINTERS FOR PROGRESS**, we have noted thus far that we:

1. **GROW TALLER THROUGH TESTING,**
2. **GROWTH IS STUNTED BY SIN,**
3. **GROWTH IS PRODUCED BY THE WORD,**
4. **MUST LEARN TO LOVE THE UNLOVELY, and**
5. **FAITH IS DEAD WITHOUT DEEDS.**

Now we treat another very practical area of Christian maturity and that is the subject of:

6. **STRIVING FOR TONGUE CONTROL.**

Ways Christ can be seen in me:

1. **Attitude in Test**
2. **Victory in Temptation**
3. **Intake of Word**
4. **Love without Partiality**
5. **Living Faith**
6. **Tongue**

Spiritual Maturity is reflected by a controlled tongue.

James is now expounding upon what he said in:

James 1:19 & 26

You know this, my beloved brethren. Now let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. . . . If any man is thinking himself to be religious, not holding in check his tongue, but is deceiving his own heart, his religion is worthless.

②
His
Words

James has been talking about the Christian and his **WORKS** in chapter 2, in the first 12 verses of chapter 3, and in the last 6 verses, about the Christian and his **WISDOM**. ③

①

Ironsides points out:

So the tongue, seemingly so weak in-itself, has power to make or break one's life and testimony. Nor can any man control it in his own strength. When the tongue is surrendered to Christ, and dominated by the Spirit, it becomes one of our most useful members. When it falls under the control of the Enemy, it works untold grief and damage.

Only a word of anger,
but it wounded one sensitive heart.
Only a word of sharp reproach,
but it made the teardrops start.

Only a hasty, thoughtless word,
sarcastic and unkind,
but it darkened the day before so bright
and left a stain behind.

Abuse:

Sexual

Physical

Verbal

Tongue
Chapter 3:
Proverbs

No Man was ever
Shot by His wife
while doing dishes

v. 1 Stop becoming many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation.

James gives a WARNING at the outset of those who are desiring to be "TEACHERS" of the truth, because:

WITH GREATER KNOWLEDGE GOES GRATER RESPONSIBILITY.

Matthew 12:36-37

Jesus said "and I tell you this, that you must give account on Judgment Day for every idle word you speak. Your words here reflect your faith, either you will be justified by them or you will be condemned."

With the psalmist we need to pray often:

Psalm 141:3

Help me Lord to keep my mouth shut and my lips sealed.

God has distinguished us from the rest of the creation in that we use our tongues to COMMUNICATE. He distinguishes men by the GOOD or EVIL use we make of them.

Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds.
You can't do that when you are flying words.
Careful with fire is good advice, we know.
Careful with words is 10 times doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed sometimes fall back dead,
but God, Himself, can't kill them once they're said.

What awesome RESPONSIBILITY those who teach the Scriptures must face at the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

Psalm 19:12-14

12 How can I know all the sins lurking
in my heart?

Cleanse me from these hidden
faults.

13 Keep me from deliberate sins!

Don't let them control me.

Then I will be free of guilt
and innocent of great sin.

14 May the words of my mouth and the
thoughts of my heart

be pleasing to you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

v. 2 For we commit many sins. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a fully developed man, able to hold in check also his entire body.

This is the **KEY VERSE** in the **SIXTH POINTER FOR PROGRESS:**

STRIVE FOR TONGUE CONTROL.

What James is doing here is giving the **REASON** for his previous statement "that we shall receive a greater condemnation":

* **"FOR WE COMMIT MANY SINS."**

Then he makes this **STATEMENT:**

"IF ANYONE DOES NOT STUMBLE IN WORD, THIS ONE IS A FULLY DEVELOPED [OR MATURE] MAN, ABLE TO HOLD IN CHECK ALSO HIS ENTIRE BODY."

A man who is able to **CONTROL HIS TONGUE** is also able to control the **APPETITES OF HIS BODY.**

The only way that this can be done is through the fruitage of the Spirit, Galatians 5, which is **SELF-CONTROL.**

Our **KEY VERSE** to the entire book is **James 1:4** which says:

* **let patience be having its complete work in order that you may be fully developed and complete, lacking in nothing.**

And now James, here in **verse 2**, mentions the fact that one who is able to control his tongue:

"IS A FULLY DEVELOPED [MATURE] MAN."

* 1 Corinthians 9:27

But I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Discipline is inter-related.

Body

Appetites

Sex

Words

Attitudes

Actions

Spiritual

As we allow the Spirit of God to control our tongues, we will be fulfilling that command in:

* James 1:19

being quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

Don Gilmore in his book Freedom to Fail points out:

The depth of a person's freedom is revealed in and through his ability to hold his silence and to use it discerningly. The most famous Christian I know is a man who remains silent on any subject that might lead to self-congratulations. Whenever conversation reaches a point where he might need to comment on his latest writings, honors, speech makings, experiences with other important people, he grows strangely silent or attempts to change the subject. There is a great power and freedom in him because there is much that runs deep in his soul, unarticulated and secret. I cannot imagine this man namedropping or relating his most recent prayer experience or exclaiming for all to hear how wonderfully the Lord is using him. A man like this is rooted and grounded in God's presence and is free of the external need to be babbling like a shallow brook.

1. Test — Surrender to His Sov.
2. Tempt — Run! Crying Help! Lord Your property is in danger
3. Appetite — Treat Your Body roughly! Hunger for the word
4. Love — Fruit of the Spirit ~~the~~ Love without partiality
5. Fruit — Evid. of changed lives! Evid. of Living Faith
6. Tongue — Words - Edify, Encourage, Praise, Gratitude

It is my earnest prayer that we might PAUSE just now and seek the Spirit's control of our tongues.

Lord, I'm concerned about my words but beyond that it's what's in my heart!!

Joseph

Words Are our Thoughts going Public!

When the Spirit is truly controlling our Tongues!

- ① Praise to God
- ② Speak Gratitude + Thanks Giving
- ③ Love to Sing.
- ④ Speak words of love.

v. 3 Now if we are putting bridles in the mouths of the horses, in order that they may be obeying us, we are also guiding their whole body.

James, in verses 3-5, is going to be giving us THREE ILLUSTRATIONS of that which is LITTLE but POWERFUL.

The FIRST ILLUSTRATION he is using is the:

"PUTTING [OF A] BRIDLE IN THE MOUTHS OF THE HORSES."

The PURPOSE for doing this is:

"IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY BE OBEYING US, AND WE ARE ALSO GUIDING THEIR WHOLE BODY."

If we but could permit the Spirit of God to put His bridle in our mouths, in order that we might be obeying Him, He too would be able to "GUIDE [OUR] WHOLE BODY."

I lost a very little word,
only the other day.

It was a very naughty word,
I had not meant to say.

But then, it was not really lost,
when from my lips it flew.
My little brother picked it up
and now he says it too.

Ps. 32:9 : "Do not be
like a senseless horse or
mule that needs a bit and
bridle to keep it under
control."

v. 4 Behold, also the ships, though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, are being guided by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman leads it.

Here James uses the SECOND ILLUSTRATION of a LARGE SHIP and a "VERY SMALL RUDDER."

Our tongues are like the "RUDDER."

The important QUESTION is:

WHO IS THE PILOT?

Are we? Or is the Lord? The Spirit?

Have You Ever Addressed This Issue
Wise As A Serpent + Harmless As A Dove

"It's when you feel like you have to say something that you end up saying the dumbest things."

"There are a lot of messages that would have been twice as effective with half the words."

v. 5 So also the tongue is a small member and it is boasting of great things.

Behold, how large a forest, a little fire sets ablaze.

Now James applies the **TRUTH** of the first statement and then gives a **THIRD ILLUSTRATION**.

HIS APPLICATION to the truth is:

"THE TONGUE IS A SMALL MEMBER AND IT IS BOASTING OF GREAT THINGS."

Behold, how large a forest
a little fire sets ablaze.

The **ILLUSTRATION** is one of how large a **FOREST** a little **FIRE SETS ABLAZE**.

~~Verse 6 "And the tongue is a fire."~~

You have a little prisoner.
He is nimble, sharp, and clever.
He's sure to get away from you,
unless you watch him ever.

And when he once gets out,
he makes more trouble in an hour
than you can stop in many a day
at work with all your power.

He gets your playmates by the ears.
He says what isn't so
and uses many ugly words,
no good for you to know.

Quick, fasten tight the ivory gates
and chain him while he's young.
For this same, dangerous prisoner
is just your little tongue.

Barclay points out:

The stroke of the whip makes marks on the flesh, but the stroke of the tongue breaks the bones. Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue.

There are **THREE THINGS** you can never get back:

1. A spent arrow,
2. A spoken word, and
3. A lost opportunity.

* Forest lands in Oregon and Washington.

"Behold how large a forest a little fire sets ablaze."

In 1871, a cow kicked over a lamp in a shed in **CHICAGO** and a fire was started which encompassed almost the entire city.

Because the tongue is a little member, and yet causes such great things, we would do well to pray the **PRAYER OF A LITTLE GIRL:** *Young lady*

Lord, of all patience and understanding, I confess unto you today the wild and untamed nature of my tongue. It slips the leash of my will and goes off on paths of its own choosing. It has wounded my parents, scarred my friends and sent my little brother crying upstairs to bed. When it has calmed down I am surprised at the wild chase it had and the strange things it did. Yet, Oh God, I know that it is mine and in sorrow I confess my ownership. The hate of its words was the hate of my heart. The gossip that it carried was but my own innerself brought out into the open. Its falsehood grew out of my own fears. Teach me, my Father God, something of the patient understanding of Jesus when He looked at the faults of other people. Save me from foolish anxiety and thoughtless plans, thus put Thou a bridle on my tongue.

v. 6 And the tongue is a fire, the sum total of iniquity. The tongue so presents itself in our members, staining the whole body, and is setting on fire the course of existence, and is being set on fire by hell.

In verses 6-8, we see something of the **DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THE TONGUE**. It is a "FIRE." It can consume and turn to ashes the character of a person in a moment. It burns in the following ways.

1. **SPEAKING IDLE WORDS**—not according to the truth. You don't know all the details, but to have something to talk about, you fill in your own.

Psalm 34:13

Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile.

Psalm 120:2

Deliver my soul, Oh Jehovah, from lying lips.

2. **INSINUATING EVILS**—You don't really know if this juicy little morsel is true or not, but it sure makes an exciting conversation.

Psalm 52:2

Thy tongue devises very wickedness like a sharp razor working deceitfully.

Proverbs 4:24

Put away from thee a crooked mouth.

3. Speaking of things which REFLECT ON THE CHARACTER of another child of God.

Proverbs 18:8

The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels.

Proverbs 16:28

A perverse man sows strife; and a whisperer separates familiar friends.

4. MAGNIFYING FAULTS

* Booker T. Washington said:

"You can't hold a fellow down in the ditch unless you stay there with him."

5. WORDS THAT BELITTLE

Psalms 64:3

Who whet their tongues like a sword and have aimed the arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the innocent.

It is human nature to speak of FAULTS rather than VIRTUES.

its so easy to point out weaknesses.
" " " " be critical

Hard to say words of AFFirmation.

The tongue is not only a "FIRE" but it is:

"THE SUM TOTAL OF INIQUITY."

It is "THE SUM TOTAL OF INIQUITY" in that it:

1. SUGGESTS SIN to us and to others,
2. COMMITTS SIN by LYING and GOSSIP, and
3. EXCUSES and DEFENDS SIN in justifying itself.

Barclay, in commenting on the last phrase in this verse, says:

An uncontrolled tongue is like a world hostile to and ignorant of God. It is the part of us which disobeys, defies, and rebels against God.

What James is saying is that the tongue can kindle a destructive fire which can destroy all life. The tongue itself is kindled with the very "FIRE OF HELL."

From birth to the grave this fire in our mouths burns and destroys.

Satan used volumes of words
From 4 Friends to Almost do Job in!

v. 7 For every creature, wild animals and birds, reptiles and sea creatures, is being tamed and has been tamed by human kind.

Here in verse 7 James speaks about the fact that it is POSSIBLE TO TAME WILD ANIMALS of all sorts.

Then in verse 8 he is going to liken this to the IMPOSSIBILITY OF TAMING THE TONGUE.

A Barnhouse in his book Let Me Illustrate points out:

At the trainer's signal a 16-foot whale, weighing 34,000 lbs., leaped straight out of the water until his tale was a foot above the surface; he opened his mouth to receive the handful of fish and fell back into the pool with a splash. A second whale took one end of a rope from another trainer and carried it 100 feet down the pool to the first trainer. When the two trainers pulled the rope so that it was six feet above the surface, the second whale broke the water and jumped the rope. For an hour whales, porpoises, sea lions and seals went through their paces at Marineland, near Pacific Palisades.

Here before our eyes was a striking illustration of James 3:7: "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind." When I saw this truth, I was forced to admit the truth of the next line: "But the tongue can no man tame . . ." I asked the Lord to keep mine cleansed so that it might praise the Lord in holiness.

p. 319

Poodle

Aggie Friends who have A
weiny Dog - Dachshund.

You want to be A longhorn
Drops over on his side
& plays dead.

v. 8 But the tongue no one in the human race is able to tame: a restless evil, full of death-bringing poison.

Here is the CONTRAST to verse 7. Although it is possible to tame all sorts of wild creatures, yet:

"THE TONGUE NO ONE IN THE HUMAN RACE IS ABLE TO TAME."

The "TONGUE" is not only:

1. "a fire" and
2. "the sum total of iniquity," but it is
3. "A RESTLESS EVIL, FULL OF DEATH-BRINGING POISON."

The picture here is of a DEATH-BRINGING COBRA SNAKE that is wild and ready to strike.

The picture here of the "TONGUE" is similar to that of the WILDMAN in Mark 5 who was DEMON-POSSESSED.

We read of him in:

Mark 5:3-4

This man lived among the grave-stones and had such strength that whenever he was put in handcuffs and shackles, as he often was, he snapped the handcuffs from his wrists and smashed the shackles and walked away.

No one was strong enough to control him.

Paul, in describing the unsaved, says in:

Romans 3:13

Their talk is foul and filthy like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are loaded with lies. Everything they say has in it the sting and poison of deadly snakes.

It is the function of the HOLY SPIRIT to:

TAME THE TONGUE.

Let the Spirit function in
this capacity!

Grieving

Quenching

"Lord, May Your Spirit Speak
Through Me!"

Moses: "Now Go! ... I will help You speak well,
And I will tell You what to say!"

Lord, my eyes, ears, mind, tongue
Hands & feet

Rom. 6:13

v. 9 With it we are praising the Lord and Father: and with it we are cursing men, who have been made in the likeness of God.

James has presented to us in verses 9-12 the INCONSISTENCY and INSTABILITY of a:

DOUBLE-MINDED MAN.

First of all he says:

~~✗~~ "WITH IT WE ARE PRAISING THE LORD AND FATHER; AND WITH IT WE ARE CURSING MEN, WHO HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD."

Spirit

Flesh

Here we see the CONFLICT between the TWO NATURES that dwell with us:

Some of the NEW nature and some of the OLD.

Some of the SAINT and much of the SINNER.

On SUNDAY we PRAISE THE LORD and Father.

On MONDAY, in our business, we CURSE MEN who have been made in the likeness of God.

John Bunyon tells us of Talkative:

He was a saint abroad, but a devil at home. Many a man speaks with perfect courtesy to strangers and preaches love and gentleness and yet snaps with ungracious and impatient anger at his family.

Kid in the locker room

Controlled by the flesh

There are women who will speak sweet and gracious words at a religious meeting and then go outside and murder someone's reputation with a malicious gossiping tongue.

Dr. Johnson points out:

When we curse man, we curse God because of the degree of likeness. The tongue can reflect only one nature. If both good and bad come, the nature must be bad for good can never produce evil though an evil nature may speak something good.

v.10 Out of the same mouth is proceeding blessings and cursings. My brethren, it is not necessary that these things keep on happening.

PETER is an illustration of the first part of this verse—out of the same mouth is preceding:

BLESSINGS and

CURSINGS.

We see him, as the Lord is preparing to go to the cross saying:

“though I should die with Thee, yet I will not deny Thee.”

Then at the critical hour he DENIES—with:

OATHS and

CURSES.

James says:

* “MY BRETHREN, IT IS NOT NECESSARY THAT THESE THINGS KEEP ON HAPPENING.”

“There is Victory by dependance ON the Spirit”

Here James makes a STATEMENT that agrees with what the apostle Paul teaches in Romans 7 & 8.

The two natures that abide in us and the fact that we do not have to submit as Christians to the control of the flesh, but that we can yield to the power of the Spirit and experience control even over our tongues.

Paul says in:

Romans 7:15-8:5

I don't understand myself at all. For I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to, what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong and that the laws that I am breaking are good ones, but I can't help myself because I am not doing it, it is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things. I know I am rotten, through and through, so far as my whole sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. This sin still has me in its evil grasp. When I want to do good, I don't. When I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. Now, if I am doing what I don't want to, it is plain where the trouble is. Sin still has me in its evil grasp. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love to do God's will, so far as my new nature is concerned. There is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin and death that are still within me. In my mind, I still want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin. So you see how it, my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin. Oh, what a terrible thing this is. Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! it has been done through Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free. So there is no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit and this power is mine through Christ Jesus, has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death.

We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God because we can't and don't keep them. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent His Own Son in a human body like ours, except ours are sinful, and destroyed sin's control over us by giving Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. So now, we can obey God's laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us. Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower natures live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God.

So the apostle Paul, like James, would agree that:

It is not necessary for these things to keep on happening if our tongues are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Our **SIXTH POINTER FOR PROGRESS** says to:

STRIVE FOR TONGUE CONTROL.

The only way that this can be done is to submit to the **CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** Who is able to tame the tongue.

Job 6:24-25

Teach me and I will hold my tongue and cause me to understand that in which I have erred. How forcible are right words.

v.11 The spring is not pouring forth out of the same opening. the sweet and the bitter [water] is it?

Here James, by use of illustration, once again in verses 11 & 12 is going to **ILLUSTRATE THE TRUTH** that he has just mentioned in verses 9 & 10.

First of all, he uses the **ILLUSTRATION** of a **SPRING OF WATER** giving forth both:

"SWEET" and

"BITTER [WATER]"

from **"THE SAME OPENING."**

The **IMPOSSIBILITY** of such a thought ought to cause us to realize how necessary it is that we learn:

TONGUE CONTROL BY SUBMITTING TO THE SPIRIT.

v.12 A fig tree, my brethren, is not able to produce olives or a vine, figs, is it?
Neither can a salt spring give sweet water.

Here James furthers his thought with **TWO MORE ILLUSTRATIONS:**

1. "A FIG TREE . . . IS NOT ABLE TO PRODUCE OLIVES OR A VINE, FIGS."
2. "NEITHER CAN A SALT SPRING GIVE SWEET WATER."

~~Spirit – Sweet Water~~

~~Spirit – Figs~~

~~Spirit – Salt~~

James sounds a great deal like the Lord Jesus in:

Matthew 23:25-28

Woe to you, Pharisees, and you religious leaders. Hypocrites, you are so careful to polish the outside of the cup, but the inside is foul with extortion and greed. Blind Pharisees, first cleanse the inside of the cup and then the whole cup will be clean. Woe to you, Pharisees, and you religious leaders. You are like beautiful sepulchers, full of dead men's bones and of foulness and corruption. You try to look like saintly men, but underneath those pious robes are hearts besmirched with every sort of hypocrisy and sin.

If our lives are under the control of the **HOLY SPIRIT**, the Spirit will produce within us **TONGUE CONTROL** as one of the **EVIDENCES OF HIS WORK**.

This truth is true throughout the epistle. If we are ever going to move forward toward **MATURITY IN THE FAITH**, it is going to be the **HOLY SPIRIT**:

who teaches us how to **GROW TALLER THROUGH TESTING**,

who is going to **GIVE US VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION** so that our growth is not stunted by sin,

who will **GUIDE US INTO ALL TRUTH** so growth will be produced by the Word,

PRODUCING His fruitage of **LOVE IN OUR LIVES** that knows no discrimination,

working in lives that will **PRODUCE DEEDS THAT MANIFEST A LIVING FAITH**, and

who **ALONE CAN CONTROL THE TONGUE**.

Test

Temptation

Word

Love

Fruit

Tongue

March 25
Saturday

WHEN THE FIRE GOES OUT

READ:
Proverbs 26:17-28

Where there is no
wood, the fire goes
out; and where there
is no talebearer, strife
ceases.
—Proverbs 26:20

THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:
■ Joshua 19-21
■ Luke 2:25-52

a sinning friend in trouble.

We must ask God for the wisdom to know when to speak, what to speak, and when to simply keep our mouths shut. For “in the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19).

It is often wise to be quiet and speak few words. But if we must speak, let's talk of those things that encourage and move others closer to God, not those things that will discourage and hurt them. “The tongue of the wise promotes health” (Proverbs 12:18). —David Roper

*The tongue can spread suspicion,
And reputations steal;
But when the Lord controls our tongue,
Its words will soothe and heal. —Sper*

Destroy gossip by ignoring it.

When a fire finishes burning through the material it feeds on, it goes out. Similarly, when gossip reaches the ear of someone who will not repeat it, it dies.

Gossip, like other sins, is like “tasty trifles” (Proverbs 26:22). We like to hear it and share it with others because it “tastes” good. Gossip is rooted in our need to feel good about ourselves. As we bring others down, we gain the illusion that we are moving upward.

That's why spreading gossip is so difficult to resist. It takes prayer and God's grace to bring us to the point where we refuse to pass it on or even hear it—even under the guise of personal concern or a request to pray for

CONCLUSION:

The **PSALMIST** said in:

Psalm 39:1

I said I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue.

PAUL says in:

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do, or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus and come with Him into the presence of God the Father to give Him your thanks.

The Lord Christ wanted a tongue one day
to speak a message of cheer to a heart
that was weary and worn and sad
and weighed with a mighty fear. **TWAS**
He asked me for mine, but ~~thaws~~ busy quite
with my own affairs from morn till night.
The Lord Christ wanted a hand one day
to do a loving deed.
He wanted two feet on an errand for Him
to run with gladsome speed.
But I had need of my own that day.
To His gentle beseeching, I answered Nay.
So all that day I used my tongue,
my hands and my feet as I chose.
I said some hasty, bitter words
that hurt one heart, God knows.
I busied my hands with worthless play
and my willful feet went a crooked way.
And the dear Lord Christ, with His work undone
for lack of a willing heart,
only through men does He speak to men,
~~dumb must He be of heart.~~
I do not know, but I wish today
I had let the Lord Christ have His way.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Our spiritual maturity is reflected by a controlled tongue.

LESSON #2: We will be held accountable for our words at the Judgment seat of Christ.

LESSON #3: The tongue can only reflect one nature at a time.

LESSON #4: The Holy Spirit is the only One who can control the tongue.

LESSON #5: Though little, the tongue can do extensive damage.

"My wanderings
of mind and my
idle speaking...
lay not to my
Charge"

Andrewes

2:9,26

63
4th week
6+7

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STUDY # SIX
STRIVE FOR TONGUE CONTROL 3:1-12

KEY VERSE: 3:2 For we commit many sins. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a fully developed man able to hold in check also his entire body.

MEMORY VERSE: 3:5

TEXT: 3:1-12

Stop becoming many teachers my brethren knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation. For we commit many sins. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a fully developed man able to hold in check also his entire body. Now if we are putting bridles in the mouths of the horses, in order that they may be obeying us, we are also guiding their whole body. Behold, also the ships, though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, are being guided by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman leads him. So also the tongue is a small member and it is boasting of great things. Behold how large a forest a little fire sets ablaze. And the tongue is a fire; the sum total of iniquity. The tongue so presents itself in our members, staining the whole body and is setting on fire the course of existence and is being set on fire by hell. For every creature, wild animals and birds, reptiles and sea creatures, is being tamed and has been tamed by human kind. But the tongue no one, in the human race, is able to tame; a restless evil, full of death bring poison. With it, we are praising the Lord and Father, and with it, we are cursing men who have been made in the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth is proceeding blessings and cursings. My brethren it is not necessary that these things keep on happening. The spring is not pouring forth out of the same opening, the sweet and the bitter [water] is it? A fig tree, my brethren, is not able to produce olives or a vine, figs, is it? Neither can a salt spring give sweet water.

EXPOSITION: In our study of James, with the subject Pointers for Progress, we have noted thus far that we grow taller through testing, growth is stunted by sin, growth is produced by the Word, we are to learn to love the unlovely, and that faith is dead without deeds. Now we treat another very practical area of Christian maturity and that is the subject of striving for tongue control.

1. James is now expounding upon what he said in 1:19&26 "You know this, my beloved brethren, now let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger....if any man is thinking himself to be religious, not holding in check his tongue, but is deceiving his own heart, his religion is worthless."
2. James has been talking about the Christian and his works in chapter 2 and now he is going to talk about the Christian and his words in the first 12 verses of chapter 3 and in the last 6 verses, about the Christian and his wisdom.
3. Ironside points out that "so the tongue seemingly so weak in itself has power to make or break one's life and testimony. Nor can any man control it in his own strength. When the tongue is surrendered to Christ, and dominated by the Spirit, it becomes one of our most useful members. When it falls under the control of the Enemy, it works untold grief and damage."

Ways X can
be Seen in Me
1. Att. in Test
2. Vict. in Temp.
3. Intake of Word
4. Love for Part.
5. Living Faith
6. Tongue
SR Mat.
is reflected
by a Controlled
Tongue

- ✓4. Only a word of anger, but it wounded one sensitive heart.
Only a word of sharp reproach, but it made the teardrops start.
Only a hasty, thoughtless word, sarcastic and unkind, but it
darkened the day before so bright and left a stain behind.

Verse One: Stop becoming many teachers my brethren knowing that
we shall receive a greater condemnation.

- ✓1. James gives a warning at the outset for those who are desiring to be teachers of the truth, because with greater knowledge,
goes greater responsibility.
- ✓2. Matthew 12:36-37 "Jesus said 'and I tell you this, that you
must give account on Judgment Day for every idle word you speak.
Your words here reflect your faith, either you will be justified
by them or you will be condemned.'"
- ✓3. With the psalmist in Psalm 141:3, we need to pray often "Help
me Lord to keep my mouth shut and my lips sealed."
- ✓4. God has distinguished us from the rest of the creation in that
we use our tongues to communicate and He distinguishes men by
the good or evil use we make of them.
- ✓5. Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds. You can't
do that when you are flying words. Careful with fire is good
advice, we know. Careful with words is 10 times doubly so.
Thoughts unexpressed sometimes fall back dead, but God, Himself,
can't kill them once they're said.
- ✓6. What awesome responsibility those who teach the scriptures must
face at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Verse Two: For we commit many sins. If anyone does not stumble
in word, this one is a fully developed man able to hold in check
also his entire body.

- ✓1. This is the key verse in the 6th Pointer for Progress, strive for tongue control. What James is doing here is giving the
reason for his previous statement that we shall receive a greater
condemnation for we commit many sins. Then he makes this state-
ment, "if anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a fully
developed, or mature, man able to hold in check also his entire
body."
- ✓2. A man who is able to control his tongue, is also able to control
the appetites of his body.
- ✓3. The only way that this can be done is through the fruitage of
the Spirit...Galatians 5...which is self-control.
- ✓4. Our key verse to the entire book is 1:4 which says "let patience
be having its complete work in order that you may be fully de-
veloped and complete, lacking in nothing." And now James here
in verse 2 mentions the fact that one who is able to control
his tongue is a fully developed, or mature, man.
- ✓5. As we allow the Spirit of God to control our tongues, we will
be fulfilling that command in 1:19 "being quick to hear, slow
to speak, slow to anger."
- ✓6. Don Gilmore, in his book Freedom to Fail, points out the depth
 of a person's freedom is revealed in and through his ability
 to hold his silence and to use it discerningly. The most famous
 Christian I know is a man who remains silent on any subject that
 might lead to self-congratulations. Whenever conversation
 reaches a point where he might need to comment on his latest

Coaching

I Cor. 9:27

Discipline
is interrelated

Body
Appetites

Sex
Words

Att. Tudes
Actions

Spiritual

writings, honors, speech makings, experiences with other important people, he grows strangely silent or attempts to change the subject. There is a great power and freedom in him because there is much that runs deep in his soul, unarticulated and secret. I cannot imagine this man namedropping or relating his most recent prayer experience or exclaiming for all to hear how wonderfully the Lord is using him. A man like this is rooted and grounded in God's presence and is free of the external need to be babbling like a shallow brook.

✓ 7. It is my earnest prayer that we might pause just now and seek the Spirit's control of our tongues.

Verse Three: Now if we are putting bridles in the mouths of the horses, in order that they may be obeying us, we are also guiding their whole body.

- ✓ 1. James, in verses 3-5, is going to be giving us three illustrations of that which is little but powerful.
- ✓ 2. The first illustration that he is using is the putting of a bridle in the mouth of the horse. The purpose for doing this is "in order that they may be obeying us, and we are also guiding their whole body."
- ✓ 3. If we but could permit the Spirit of God to put His bridle in our mouths, in order that we might be obeying Him, He too would be able to guide our whole body.
- ✓ 4. I lost a very little word, only the other day. It was a very naughty word, I had not meant to say. But then, it was not really lost, when from my lips it flew. My little brother picked it up and now he says it too.

Verse Four: Behold, also the ships, though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, are being guided by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the steersman leads him.

1. Here James uses the second illustration of a large ship and a very small rudder.
2. Our tongues are like the rudder. The important question is who is the pilot? Are we, or is the Lord? spirit.

Verse Five: So also the tongue is a small member and it is boasting of great things. Behold how large a forest a little fire sets ablaze.

- ✓ 1. Now James applies the truth of the first statement and then gives a third illustration. His application to the truth is "the tongue is a small member and it is boasting of great things." The illustration, of course, is one of how large a forest a little fire sets ablaze.
- ✓ 2. You have a little prisoner. He is nimble, sharp, and clever. He's sure to get away from you, unless you watch him ever. And when he once gets out, he makes more trouble in an hour than you can stop in many a day at work with all your power. He gets your playmates by the ears. He says what isn't so and uses many ugly words, no good for you to know. Quick, fasten tight the ivory gates and chain him while he's young. For this same, dangerous prisoner is just your little tongue.

① Test
② Tempt
③ Appetite
④ Love
⑤ Fruit
⑥ Tongue

✓ Lord, I'm concerned about my words but beyond that is what's in my heart!! Joseph

- ✓ 3. Barclay points out "the stroke of the whip makes marks on the flesh, but the stroke of the tongue breaks the bones. Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue."
- ✓ 4. There are three things you can never get back. ①. A spent arrow ②. A spoken word ③. A lost opportunity
5. "Behold how large a forest a little fire sets ablaze". In 1871, a cow kicked over a lamp in a shed in Chicago and a fire was started with encompassed almost the entire city.
6. Because the tongue is a little member, and yet causes such great things, we would do well to pray the prayer of a little girl: "Lord of all patience and understanding, I confess unto you today the wild and untamed nature of my tongue. It slips the leash of my will and goes off on paths of its own choosing. It has wounded my parents, scarred my friends and sent my little brother crying upstairs to bed. When it has calmed down I am surprised at the wild chase it had and the strange things it did. Yet, Oh God, I know that it is mine and in sorrow I confess my ownership. The hate of its words was the hate of my heart. The gossip that it carried was but my own innerself brought out into the open. It's falsehood grew out of my own fears. Teach me, my Father God, something of the patient understanding of Jesus when He looked at the faults of other people. Save me from foolish anxiety and thoughtless plans, thus put Thou a bridle on my tongue."

Verse Six: And the tongue is a fire; the sum total of iniquity. The tongue so presents itself in our members, staining the whole body and is setting on fire the course of existence and is being set on fire by hell.

1. In verses 6-8, we see something of the destructive power of the tongue. First of all, it is a fire. It can consume and turn to ashes the character of a person in a moment. It burns in the following ways. First of all, speaking idle words, not according to the truth. You don't know all the details, but to have something to talk about, you fill in your own. Psalm 34:13 says "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." Psalm 120:2 "Deliver my soul, Oh Jehovah, from lying lips." The second way the tongue can burn is by insinuating evils. You don't really know if this juicy little morsel is true or not, but it sure makes an exciting conversation. Psalm 52:2 "Thy tongue devises very wickedness like a sharp razor working deceitfully." Proverbs 4:24 "Put away from thee a crooked mouth." The third way the tongue burns is speaking of things which reflect on the character of another child of God. Proverbs 18:8 says "The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels." Proverbs 16:28, "A perverse man sows strife; and a whisperer separates familiar friends." The fourth way it burns is by magnifying faults. Booker T. Washington said "You can't hold a fellow down in the ditch unless you stay there with him." The fifth way it burns is by words which belittle. Psalm 64:3 "Who whet their tongues like a sword and have aimed the arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the innocent."

Nature to
speak of
Faults
rather than
Virtues

forests + lands
in ore. + Wash.

lead
this Prayer

✓ 2. The tongue is not only a fire but it is the sum total of iniquity. It is the sum total of iniquity in that it suggests sin to us and to others, commits sin by lying and gossip, and excuses and defends sin in justifying itself.

3. Barclay in committing on the last phrase in this verse "an uncontrolled tongue is like a world hostile to and ignorant of God. It is the part of us which disobeys, defies, and rebels against God." What James is saying is that the tongue can kindle a destructive fire which can destroy all life and the tongue itself is kindled with the very fire of hell.

4. From birth to the grave this fire in our mouths burns and destroys.

✓ Verse Seven: For every creature, wild animals and birds, reptiles and sea creatures, is being tamed and has been tamed by human kind.

1. Here James speaks about the fact that it is possible to tame wild animals of all sorts and then in verse 8 he is going to liken this to the impossibility of taming the tongue.

2. Barnhouse, Let Me Illustrate, points out that at the trainer's signal a 16 foot whale, weighing 34,000 lbs., leaps straight out of the water until his tale was a foot above the surface. He opened his mouth to receive the handful of fish and fell back into the pool with a splash. The second whale took one end of a rope from another trainer and carried it 100 ft. down the pool to the first trainer. When the two trainers pulled the rope so that it was 6 ft. above the surface, the second whale broke the water and jumped the rope. For an hour, porpoises, whales, sea lions and seals went through their paces at Marineland. Here before our eyes was a striking illustration of James 3:7 "For every kind of beast and birds and of serpents and of things in the sea is tamed and has been tamed of mankind." When I saw this truth, I was forced to admit the truth of the next line "but the tongue can no man tame." I asked the Lord to keep my cleansed so that it might praise the Lord in holiness.

Verse Eight: But the tongue no one, in the human race, is able to tame; a restless evil, full of death bringing poison.

1. Here is the contrast to verse 7. Although it is possible to tame all sorts of wild creatures, yet the tongue, no one in the human race, is able to tame. The tongue is not only a fire and

the sum total of iniquity, but it is a restless evil, full of death bringing poison.

2. The picture here is one of a death bringing cobra snake that is wild and ready to strike. The picture here of the tongue is similar to that of the wildman in Mark 5 who was demon possessed. We read of him in verses 3-4 "this man lived among the grave-stones and had such strength that whenever he was put in handcuffs and shackles, as he often was, he snapped the handcuffs from his wrists and smashed the shackles and walked away." No one was strong enough to control him.

3. Paul, in describing the unsaved in Romans 3:13, says "their talk is foul and filthy like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are loaded with lies. Everything they say has in it the sting and poison of deadly snakes."

It is the function of the H.S. to tame the tongue.

Poodle

Verse Nine: With it, we are praising the Lord and Father, and with it, we are cursing men who have been made in the likeness of God.

1. James has presented to us the inconsistency and instability of a double-minded man and now he is going to talk to us about a double-tongued man in verses 9 - 12. First of all, he says "with it we are praising the Lord and Father and with it we are cursing men who have been made in the likeness of God."
2. Here we see the conflict between the two natures that dwell within us. Some of the new nature and some of the old; some of the saint and much of the sinner.
3. On Sunday we praise the Lord and Father and on Monday in our business, we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God.
4. John Bunyon tells us of Talkative. He was a saint abroad, but a devil at home. Many a man speaks with perfect courtesy to strangers and preaches love and gentleness and yet snaps with ungracious and impatient anger at his family.
5. There are women who will speak sweet and gracious words at a religious meeting and then go outside and murder someone's reputation with a malicious gossiping tongue.
6. Dr. Johnson points out that when we curse man, we curse God because of the degree of likeness. The tongue can reflect only one nature. If both good and bad come, the nature must be bad for good can never produce evil though an evil nature may speak something good.

Verse Ten: Out of the same mouth is proceeding blessings and cursings. My brethren it is not necessary that these things keep on happening.

1. Peter is an illustration of the first part of this verse--out of the same mouth is proceeding blessings and cursings. We see him, as the Lord is preparing to go to the cross saying "though I should die with Thee, yet I will not deny Thee," and then at the critical hour he denies, with oaths and curses.
2. James says "My brethren it is not necessary that these things keep on happening."
3. Here James makes a statement that agrees with what the apostle Paul teaches in Romans 7 & 8. The two natures that abide in us and the fact that we do not have to submit as Christians to the control of the flesh, but that we can yield to the power of the spirit and experience control even over our tongues. Paul says in Romans 7:15 to 8:5 "I don't understand myself at all. For I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to, what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong and that the laws that I am breaking are good ones, but I can't help myself because I am not doing it, it is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things. I know I am rotten, through and through, so far as my whole sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. This sin still have me in its evil grasp. When I want to do good, I don't. When I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. Now, if I am doing what I don't want to, it is plain where the trouble is. Sin still have me in it's evil grasp. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love to do

Spin +
Flesh

Kid in
The Locker
room !!

Controlled
by Flesh

Peter

God's Will, so far as my new nature is concerned. There is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin and death that are still within me. In my mind, I still want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin. So you see how it, my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin. Oh, what a terrible thing this is. Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! it has been done through Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free. So there is no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit and this power is mine through Christ Jesus, has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death."

4. We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God because we can't and don't keep them. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent His Own Son in a human body like ours, except ours are sinful, and destroyed sins control over us by giving Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. So now, we can obey God's Laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us. Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower natures live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God.
5. So the apostle Paul, like James, would agree that it is not necessary for these things to keep on happening if our tongues are under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- * * 6. Our 6th Pointer for Progress says to strive for tongue control and the only way that this can be done is to submit to the control of the Holy Spirit who is able to tame the tongue.
7. Job 6:24-25--"Teach me and I will hold my tongue and cause me to understand that in which I have erred. How forcible are right words."

Verse Eleven: The spring is not pouring forth out of the same opening, the sweet and the bitter [water] is it?

1. Here James, by use of illustration, once again in verses 11 & 12 is going to illustrate the truth that he has just mentioned in verses 9 & 10.
2. First of all, he uses the illustration of a spring of water giving forth both sweet and bitter water from the same opening. The impossibility of such a thought ought to cause us to realize how necessary it is that we learn tongue control by Sub. to Spirit.

Verse Twelve: A fig tree, my brethren, is not able to produce olives or a vine, figs, is it? Neither can a salt spring give sweet water.

1. Here James furthers his thought with two more illustrations. First of all the fig tree will not produce olives nor a vine, figs. In the last phrase he returns to the illustration from the water by pointing out that a salt spring cannot give sweet water.

Spirit - Sweet water

" = Figs
" = Salt

2. James sounds a great deal like the Lord Jesus in Matthew 23:25-28 "Woe to you, Pharisees, and you religious leaders, Hypocrites, you are so careful to polish the outside of the cup, but the inside is foul with extortion and greed. Blind Pharisees, first cleanse the inside of the cup and then the whole cup will be clean. Woe to you, Pharisees, and you religious leaders. You are like beautiful sepulchers, full of dead men's bones and of foulness and corruption. You try to look like saintly men, but underneath those pious robes are hearts besmirched with every sort of hypocrisy and sin."
3. If our lives are under the control of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will produce within us tongue control as one of the evidences of His work.
4. This truth is true throughout the epistle. If we are ever going to move forward toward maturity in the faith, it is going to be the Holy Spirit who teaches us how to grow taller through testing. It is the Holy Spirit who is going to give us victory over temptation so that our growth is not stunted by sin. It is the Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth and so growth will be produced by the Word. It is the Holy Spirit producing His fruitage of love in our lives that knows no discrimination. It is the Holy Spirit working in lives that will produce deeds that manifest a living faith. It is the Holy Spirit who alone can control the tongue.

CONCLUSION: The psalmist said in Psalm 39:1 "I said I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue."

Paul says in Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do, or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus and come with Him into the presence of God the Father to give Him your thanks."

The Lord Christ wanted a tongue one day to speak a message of cheer to a heart that was weary and worn and sad and weighed with a mighty fear. He asked me for mine, but thwas busy quite with my own affairs from morn til night. The Lord Christ wanted a hand one day to do a loving deed. He wanted two feet on an errand for Him to run with gladsome speed. But I had need of my own that day. To His gentle beseeching, I answered Nay. So all that day I used my tongue my hands and my feet as I chose. I said some hasty, bitter words that hurt one heart, God knows. I busied my hands with worthless play and my willful feet went a crooked way. And the dear Lord Christ, with His work undone for lack of a willing heart, only through men does He speak to men, dumb must He be of heart. I do not know, but I wish today I had let the Lord Christ have His way.

Lessons From This Study:

- #1 Our Spiritual Maturity is reflected by a Controlled Tongue.
- #2 We will be held accountable For our words At the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- #3 The Tongue can only reflect one nature At A Time...
- #4 The Holy Spirit is the only one who can Control the Tongue.
- #5 Though little the Tongue can do extensive damage..

Test
Tempt.
word
Love
Fruit
Tongue

Holy
Spirit