

TAMING THE UNTAMABLE- James 3

The Book of James is definitely a “how to” book of “discipleship.” In chapter 3 James draws the attention of his audience to that *small yet, “powerful” “member” which we all physically possess* called ...**the “tongue!”** In James 1:26 he reminds us, if left “unchecked” it can *render* our testimony, *in Christ*, “useless,” (1:26). **Jesus also said: (Matthew 12:34b) For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.** James understood, as someone once said; *The tongue is the ambassador of the heart. If satan can influence our hearts, he can control our tongue, thereby “distorting” the message of the gospel!*

James begins his exhortation regarding the tongue by *first* shining the *spot light* on “would be” *teachers and preachers* of the word, (v.1). Those who desire to “teach” the word, should do so knowing, **God “magnifies” His word above His name (Psalm 138:2b);** thus, they will *receive* a “greater” (stricter) judgment. (2 Timothy 2:15-16) **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. (1 Peter 4:11a) If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.**

Next, James points out the dangers of an “untamed” tongue. (v.2-6). As the old saying goes: *Better a bridle on the tongue, than a lash upon the conscience.* **“Self-control begins at the “mouth!” (v.3).** The word “perfect” (v.2) means: *completeness in character; in maturity, mentally, and morally.* An “out of control tongue,” is **evidence of an “out of control life!”** Here James describes a person with a bad case of “hot lips”; *in other words, a “gossip.”* Gossip could be defined as follows: **Gossip: When people discuss a matter or a person, but they are not, nor do they desire to be a part of the solution...but continue to maliciously talk about others for the purpose of**

harming them. (Mark T. Barclay IC Life Autumn 2004, p7) Someone once said that a “gossip”;
Gossip: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.

The “unbridled tongue” has **two** primary characteristics (v.6). **1) Defiles.**
defiles – spiloo (spee-lo-o): to stain, soil, defect, and disgrace – another person’s
reputation. 2) Inspired by “hell.” *In the narcissistic society of our day, we no longer have*
to get with other people to “gossip,” we can now “tweet,” text, face book, etc.; and “demean”
others through the airwaves, at the behest (command) of the “prince of the power of the air,”
(Eph. 2:2), the “devil!” **Who is the “accuser” of the brethren, (Rev. 12:10). (Proverbs 10:19) In the**
multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Unlike the “unbridled tongue,” **“self-control,”** is one of the *characteristics,*
(fruits) of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). In Christ we are called to be “bridled” by the
Spirit of God. **What the world desperately needs, is not a “piece of my**
mind,” but a mind controlled by His “peace.” More simply put; **A closed mouth**
gathers no foot.

James further reminds us (v.7-12), of our *inability* to “tame” the tongue.
Despite mankind’s dominion over beast, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea; the “tongue”
remains “untamable!” (v.9) We have all been “guilty” of this, at one time or
another; **“blessing God,” and “cursing others!”** When you find both
“blessing” and “cursing” coming from the same “facet” of our hearts,
recognize two things: 1) This is not the norm. (v.10b).

2) the remedy is wisdom and understanding. (v.13a). “Wisdom” and
“understanding” - living a life of **“meekness of wisdom,” (v.13b). (Ecclesiastes**
5:2) Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.
For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. (v.14) “...do not
boast and lie against the truth.” In other words, “stop trying to justify your
ungodly conduct,” “Call it what it is!” “Sin!” The world loves to “relabels” it’s

godless behavior, thus, ridding themselves of any “accountability” to God. Thus, alcoholism is now a disease, abortion a choice, homosexuality called natural, sexual promiscuity – casual sex (nothing casual about it!), etc. But if we will call it what God “calls it”; drunkenness, selfishness, perversion, and shacking up - “sin” *rebellion against God* - we can be “healed!” A “spiritual mis-diagnosis,” can lead to an eternal hell! Do not make excuses for the “olives” on your “fig tree!” The “good news” is, Jesus died for “sinners!” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) **Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.**

A heart containing “bitter envy” and “self-seeking,” (*it’s all about me*); is a “proud” (boastful) heart, (v.15, 16), (see 4:6). Earthly (of this world); Sensual (corrupt desires and affections); and Demonic (under the influence of the demons). The “trinity” of **human rebellion, against God!** This wisdom gives “birth” to “confusion” and “every evil thing,” (v.16). Confusion – akatastasia (ä-kä-tä-stä-sē'-ä): a state of disorder, disturbance, anarchy, commotion. Evil – phaulos (fow-los): foul, wicked. *This is what we are “inviting” into our homes, marriages, and relationships, when we exclude the “wisdom” and “understanding,” of God.*

In (v.17, 18) There are 8 attributes of **divine wisdom** which make up the necessary “harness” (bit) for our tongues. BTW - Eight is the Hebrew number representing; new beginning, new order or creation. This is the “norm” for those who are “new creations,” in Christ! First: **1) Purity.** Faultless, free from carnality. **2) Peaceable.** To “be at peace.” “*I will keep him in perfect peace...*” (Isa. 26:3).

3) Gentle. (Philippians 4:5) **Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.** “Reasonable.” **4) Willing to yield.** Conciliatory, to assent to evidence or authority, (teachable). **5) Full of mercy.** Not “full” of one’s self. *Outward manifestation of “pity.”* In the same way God has shown us “pity” (mercy). **6) Good fruits.** “Fruit of the Spirit,” (Gal. 5); evidence of being connected

to the vine, "Jesus." 7) **No Partiality.** Without, separatism, judgement, prejudice. 8) **No hypocrisy.** Pretending, acting. These 8 attributes will deliver us from trouble. **(Proverbs 21:23) Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles. (v.18)** In order to eat the "fruit" of righteousness, we must be "sown" our seed, "words," in peace; **without** "bitter envy" and "self-seeking."

CONCLUSION: Don't allow your "ego" to control your tongue this week; it will only "Edge-God-Out." It's been said: *The nice thing about egotists is that they don't talk about other people.* (Lucille Harper) God has given us the ministry of reconciliation to promote *healing* and *restoration*, in a world torn apart by "vicious tongues!"

This week, as you are conversing with others, ask yourself this question: **Will the words I speak produce life or death?** An "open mouth" is not always a sign of wisdom! *Don't be like New Jersey's former governor, Robert B. Meyner. One restaurant owner put a picture of him in the window. He had his mouth open, and immediately above was a sign saying, "Open 24 hours a day."* **(Proverbs 18:21) Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit. "Words matter!" Power and death are also in your tongue today, if you do not know Christ. (Romans 10:9-10) "...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."**