



I. You Don't Know the Power (1-12)

You don't know the power that the tongue can wield over your entire being and the destruction it can cause!

Deep in the Bible Study of James (3:1-18)

Teachers?



*Most people want to be heard (1:19).

*What better way to be heard as a believer than to be a teacher?

*We must not be hasty in putting ourselves into a position where the tongue is constantly used.

*It is powerful and as such will incur a "greater strictness".

*The more we use our words, the more likely we will be to stumble.

*1Tim 1:3-7

*Mt 12:36



Taming the Tongue

*The tongue has So Much power over the body that James concludes "no human being can tame the tongue."

*We may think that we have some sense of the potential power of our words, but do we truly appreciate the damage we can do if they are misused?

Verse 14 Connects James' teaching on Wisdom to the Tongue

A. Importance of the Tongue (1-2)

How does this warning concerning teachers relate to his caution about the tongue? →

B. Illustrations of the Tongue (3-8)

3 Illustrations of Statement in v.2

(1) Bits Controlling Horses



(2) Rudders Controlling Ships



(3) Spark Starting a Wildfire



-Prov 16:27; 26:18-25

*Just like the bit, rudder, and spark, the tongue, though small, can wield incredible power over the body.

C. Inconsistency of the Tongue (9-12)

*He demonstrates the dangers of the tongue by explaining how it can be used for both blessing and cursing.

-Mt 7:15-20; 12:33-35; 26:33, 69-75

-Luke 6:46

-I John 4:20-21

Wisdom

*It may seem that James is changing topics to focus on earthly wisdom vs. heavenly wisdom.

*However, he ties this to the tongue in v. 14 when he warns those who "have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts" to "not boast and be false in the truth."

James 3:1-18

¹ Not many of you should become **teachers**, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will **be judged with greater strictness**. ² For we all **stumble** in many ways, and if anyone does not **stumble** in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to **bridle his whole body**.

³ If we put **bits** into the mouths of **horses** so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

⁴ Look at the **ships** also: though they are so **large** and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very **small rudder** wherever the will of the pilot directs.

⁵ So also the **tongue** is a **small** member, yet it boasts of **great** things. How **great** a forest is set ablaze by such a **small fire**!

⁶ And the **tongue** is a **fire**, a world of unrighteousness. The **tongue** is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on **fire** the entire course of life, and set on **fire** by hell.

⁷ For every kind of **beast** and **bird**, of **reptile** and **sea creature**, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,

⁸ but **no human being can tame the tongue**. It is a restless evil, full of **deadly poison**.

⁹ With it we **bless** our Lord and Father, and with it we **curse** people who are made in the **likeness of God**.

¹⁰ From the **same mouth** come **blessing** and **cursing**. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

¹¹ Does a **spring** pour forth from the **same opening** both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a **fig tree**, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a **salt pond** yield fresh water.

II. Your Heart Must Be Changed (13-18)

¹³ Who is **wise** and understanding among you? By his good conduct **let him show his works** in the meekness of **wisdom**.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your **hearts**, do not **boast and be false to the truth**.

¹⁵ This is not the **wisdom** that comes down from above, but is **earthly, unspiritual, demonic**. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

¹⁷ But the **wisdom** from above is first **pure**, then **peaceable, gentle**, open to **reason**, full of **mercy** and **good fruits**, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a **harvest of righteousness** is sown in **peace** by those who make **peace**.

Signs of Heavenly Wisdom in our use of the tongue

What is in Your Heart? - *Words are driven by what is on our hearts.* This is consistent with what Jesus said in Mt 12:33-35, "How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Humans cannot transform their own hearts. But, if we allow God to transform our hearts and minds (Ps 51:10), we can be one whose tongue is used to sow peace instead of destruction.