

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“The Tongue Is a Fire”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 3:2-12

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-10**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 11**. Today we continue in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #17. I have titled today’s message *“The Tongue Is a Fire”* (3:6).
-) Because of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden some 6,100 years ago, we are all born with this thing called the human condition. It causes every human being to sin by violating the laws of God. We sin in our thoughts, in our actions, and in the words we speak.
-) In these 11 verses from James, the author is concentrating on this. Our words. What can this do? What has this done? Do we engage our brain before we put this (point) into gear? What positive things this can do? What negative things can this do?
-) Today I will be covering these 11 verses (2-12) from chapter 3 because it is one thought process and this context is actually pretty simple to follow. This (point) can be a problem.
-) **SLIDE 12**. Let’s lay a Biblical foundation for today’s lesson on the tongue. LUKE 6:43-45. The mouth will speak what the heart is full of. The next obvious question is this. What is in a person’s heart? Let’s hope something good is in here.
-) **SLIDE 13**. Jesus answers that question. MATT 6:19-21.
-) Our tongues speak words and our words reflect the treasures of our hearts. What are our treasures? Our treasures are our emotions and feelings inside us at any particular time. And when we speak, we share those treasures with others.

-) In the first century Roman empire, pretty much the only form of communication was the spoken word—from the tongue. Very few people had the ability read or write, and other forms of communication were non-existent. So, when the Bible speaks of the tongue, at that time, it was referencing, primarily, to the spoken word—what comes out of here.
-) But in today's 21st century American culture, our words are not restricted to what comes from our mouths—the spoken word. Today, we have something called the internet and social media. We can share the treasures of our hearts via email, Facebook, Instagram, Text Messaging, Twitter, Tic Toc, Instant Message, and many other forms of electronic communication. So, today, we must include all of these forms of communication when we speak about the tongue and how we must control it.
-) Our words are like toothpaste coming out of a tube. Once they're out, you cannot get them back in. Are we careful about sharing the treasures of our heart? Are we careful before we hit that “*send*” button or that “*post*” button?
-) **SLIDE 14.** Let's look at what James is telling us about the tongue. JAMES 3:3-4. James first compares the tongue to a bit which goes into a horse's mouth to control the direction of that horse. It is just a small piece, but it directs the entire body of the horse.
-) Then he makes a second analogy and compares the tongue to the rudder of a ship. The rudder on a ship is just a small piece, but it has the ability of directing the entire ship. (Titanic)
-) **SLIDE 15.** Our tongue sets a **DIRECTION** in our lives.
-) If you are or have ever been married, there was a time in your courting process when you said very sweet words to win your partner over. Remember? Those sweet words were a big factor in you and your spouse getting married. Those sweet words set a direction in your lives in a very positive way.

-) **SLIDE 16.** But in v5-6, James tells us that the tongue has the potential for defiling the entire body when used in a negative way. JAMES 3:5-6.
-) In this text James also says that the negativity coming from here (point) sets on fire the course of our lives. What did he say earlier? The tongue sets a direction in our lives. The question now becomes what direction will that be?
-) We really must ask ourselves these questions. How would my life be different today had I not made that phone call and spoke those words? Had I not posted that post on Facebook? Had I not pressed “send” on that email?
-) How would my life be different today had I spoken the things I should have spoken? We have all asked those questions. And we will never know those answers.
-) **SLIDE 17.** But James doesn’t let up. He keeps on digging in a little more into all of our hearts. JAMES 3:8-10.
-) Our words can be full of deadly poison. How so? ROMANS 1 says we can be gossips, slanderers, and boastful. GAL 5 says we can have outbursts of anger, disputes, and dissensions. And EPH 5 commands us to refrain from silly talk and coarse joking. Deadly poison. All of it.
-) **SLIDE 18.** And we can be real good at saying one thing to a person’s face and then something totally opposite behind their back. JAMES 3:8-10. This is why the devil loves social media. It’s faceless and it’s impersonal and it allows us to say in cyberspace whatever we want to say to a person that we would never say to them face-to-face.
-) From the same mouth comes blessing and cursing. And that, my friends, is hypocrisy. Social media has certainly given us a license to be hypocrites on many occasions.
-) OK. We know there is a problem. So, how can we fix this thing? Let’s see what the Word of God says.

-) We speak what's in our hearts. Our hearts contain our treasures. Our treasures consists of our emotions. And when we allow our emotions get the best of us, we know that this (point) can get us into trouble.
-) **SLIDE 19**. PROV 21:23. Have you ever instantly responded to a situation with certain words that produced unfavorable results, and wish you could have had more time to react with words that would be more appropriate?
-) **SLIDE 20**. We need to **GUARD** our mouths. OK. I'll do that. How do we do that?
-) **SLIDE 21**. PROV 3:21-23. I don't know about you, but I would really rather not stumble with this (point). Amen?
-) **SLIDE 22**. We guard our mouths by seeking and acquiring **WISDOM**. When we have wisdom, we will have sound judgment and discretion. When we have sound judgment and discretion, we will guard our mouths. When we guard our mouths, we will be careful with our words.
-) And we must remember that our words, our tongues, will set a direction in our lives. If we don't control our tongues in a wise way, our tongues will control us.
-) If we understood that the words we speak, through whatever media that may be, set a direction in our lives, would we be more careful of the words we speak? In other words, what I say today can or will help me or hurt me tomorrow or next week or for the remainder of my life, within my family, my church, my work, and in my community. Are we careful?
-) **SLIDE 23**. And not only do our words set a direction in our own lives, but they can have a powerful influence over the direction of the lives of others too. PROV 18:20-21.
-) At some point in time you will eat the fruit of your words. Either you will reap the rewards (life) or you will reap the consequences (death).

-) **SLIDE 24.** Here 's a great example of words that will give life. ROMANS 10:9-10. Have you confessed with your words (with your tongue) that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life? It will be the best words you will ever speak—words that have eternal value. All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
-) **SLIDE 25.** One final thought from the words of Jesus. MATT 12:35-37.
-) What we speak, what we write, what we type, everything that we communicate will be judged one day and we will either be acquitted or condemned by those words. Speak wisely.
-) Our tongues, our words, reveal our true character and our true belief, even if it is in a moment of extreme happiness or in a moment of total frustration. Our words are the testimony of our deepest treasures.
-) Capital One may ask, “*What’s in your wallet?*” But God is asking, “*What’s in your heart?*” Because what is in our heart will spill out somewhere, someday.

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