



Midweek Bible Study:

Series Entitled: “Taming Areas of Our Lives”

(NOTES From: Tommy C. Higl “Faith That Works”)

Lesson Three: “Taming Our Tongue” James 3:5-12 (NASB)

Like a horse without a bridle or a ship without a rudder an untamed tongue means our entire lives are out of control. There are three things we should remember if we are to tame our tongues.

- **Point 1 “Our Tongues are Powerful” James 3:5b-6 (NASB)** ⁵ **So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!** ⁶ **And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.**

- James describes the destructive power of our tongues by writing: **consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark** (James 3:5) James compares our tongues to the potential danger of a small fire multiplying itself. We need to remember what truth found in Proverbs 10:19
- **Proverbs 10:19 (NASB) When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise.**

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- The damage that can be done by an untamed tongue is staggering. Hasty words spoken in anger can ruin a marriage. Careless words of criticism to a child, such as “Can’t you ever do anything right?” or “You’ll never amount to anything,” can scar that child for life. Careless words of criticism and gossip spread destruction and hurt like a fire out of control. Proverbs 26:20 tell us we can stop, or at least limit the damage of someone’s untamed tongue? **Proverbs 26:20 (NASB) For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.**

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- That means stop talking about the situation. The Enemy makes sure every group, business, workplace, and church have “verbal arsonists” who wreck lives, friendships, and fellowships. That’s why James writes: **The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body** (James 3:6). Our tongues are a potential world of evil because they can do all kinds of damage. In a few seconds our tongues can destroy relationships that took years to build. Our words are like a fire -- the damages they do can’t be reversed. James also writes: **it corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire** (James 3:6)
 - **Corrupt** means “to stain or defile” This means our tongues can stain or defile all the good we have done over a lifetime. We can do many good things, but our untamed tongues can corrupt them all. **Proverbs 12:18 (NASB) There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.**
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- **To Tame our tongues, we must remember our tongues are powerful.**

➤ **Point 2 “Our Tongues are Hurtful” James 3:7-8 (NASB) ⁷ For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. ⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison.**

- Now, James shifts from the power of our tongues to the perversity of our tongues by writing: **all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man (James 3:7)** If you have been to Sea World, you have seen the largest creatures of the sea performing amazing feats. Humans are able to tame the largest and most dangerous animals on land and sea, but James writes: **no man can tame the tongue.** James doesn’t say our tongues can’t be tamed, but no man or woman can do it **We need God’s help. Mathew 19:26 (NASB) ²⁶ And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”**

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- James Continues by telling us our tongues are a restless evil **James 3:8 (NASB) ⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.** The word translated **restless**, or “**unruly**,” means **unrestrainable** and is like a wild animal that continually breaks out of its cage. Or tongues are also full of **deadly poison**. The word translated means “**venom**” and refers to the poison of a snake. Our words can be as dangerous and deadly as the venom of a king cobra. Our tongues are deadly weapons.
 - When we see the word **poison** on a container, we put the container where it cannot be used carelessly or accidentally. In the same way, we should be very careful with our tongues. Therefore, what principle found in Proverbs 8:8 should we pray every day? **Proverbs 8:8 “All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; There is nothing crooked or perverted in them.**

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- We all tend to make excuses for hurtful, reckless words. We say things like: “**someone needs to tell him**” or “**I just have to get that off my chest**” or “**I have a short fuse and can’t help it**” we live in a culture that encourages us to speak in hurtful ways, giving no thought to the cruel, deadly impact of our words. However, a “Taming that works” will only speak what is helpful for building other up to benefit those who listen **Ephesians 4:29 (NASB) ²⁹ Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.**

To tame our tongues, we must remember our tongues are powerful and hurtful

➤ Point 3 **“Our Tongues are Revealing”** James 3:9-12 (NASB) ⁹ **With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰ from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. ¹¹ Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.**

- Our tongues reveal what is really in our hearts, what we are like on the inside. James writes that **with our tongues we praise out Lord and Father but we also curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing, my brothers, this should not be.**” (James 3:9-10). The word translated **praises**, or “**bles**,” is the Greek word from which we get our English word “**eulogy**”. It means “**to speak well of.**” The word translated **cursing** does not mean **profanity**; it means **to say things that harm someone**.
- The ultimate use of our tongues is to praise God through singing praises or sharing His Word and His blessings. However, as soon as some people are outside of worship they begin cursing- gossiping and assassinating the character of others. We have a deep spiritual problem. Our tongues unveil our hypocrisy.
- Taming our tongue is much more than restraining ourselves from vulgar talk, using God’s name in vain, and lying. **We must also stop saying bad things about people created in the image of God.** We must never forget what truth about every human being found in **Psalms 139:14a I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.**

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- Picturing our inner being or heart as a spring, James writes: **Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?** (James 3:11). You can’t get a bucket of fresh water from a saltwater well. How does Jesus express this truth in the last sentence of Luke 6:45? **Luke 6:45 (NASB) ⁴⁵ The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.**

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- James also writes: **my brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? James 3:12** Trees and vines can only produce fruit consistent with their nature. An apple tree only produces apples, and an orange tree only produces oranges, in the same way, our tongues produce words consistent with our hearts. **Nothing divulges the real condition of our hearts like the fruit of our tongues.**

- **To tame our tongues, we must regularly ask the Lord to help us.**
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- To tame our tongues, we must remember our tongues are powerful, hurtful, and revealing.
 - What do you think is the first thing you should do so you can do a better job of taming your tongue?
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