

The Destructive Power of the Tongue

James 3:1-12



James 3:1-12

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.

James 3:1-12

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.

James 3:1-12

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.

James 3:1-12

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.

James 3:1-12

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.

Theme: While the tongue has great power for evil, God can use it for good as we yield it to Him.

I. The Nature of the Tongue

Matthew 12:34-35

34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

“Nowhere is the relationship between faith and works more evident than in a person’s speech. What you are will inevitably be disclosed by what you say. It might be said that a person’s speech is a reliable measure of his spiritual temperature, a monitor of the inner human condition.”

-John F. MacArthur Jr., James, MacArthur New Testament Commentary

Romans 3:13-14

13 “Their throat is an **open grave**;
They use their tongues to **deceive**.”

“The **venom** of asps is under their lips.”

14 “Their mouth is full of **curses** and **bitterness**.”

Isaiah 6:5

5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of **unclean lips**, and I dwell in the midst of a **people of unclean lips**; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

Ephesians 4:29

29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

I. The Nature of the Tongue

II. The Power to Destroy

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II. The Power to Destroy

a) Your Relationships (Proverbs 16:27-28)

Proverbs 16:27-28

27 A worthless man plots evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.

28 A dishonest man spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends.

I. The Nature of the Tongue

II. The Power to Destroy

a) Your Relationships (Proverbs 16:27-28)

b) The Church (2 Corinthians 12:20)

2 Corinthians 12:20

20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

I. The Nature of the Tongue

II. The Power to Destroy

a) Your Relationships (Proverbs 16:27-28)

b) The Church (2 Corinthians 12:20)

c) Your Testimony to the Lost (Colossians 4:5-6)

Colossians 4:5-6

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

I. The Nature of the Tongue

II. The Power to Destroy

a) Your Relationships (Proverbs 16:27-28)

b) The Church (2 Corinthians 12:20)

c) Your Testimony to the Lost (Colossians 4:5-6)

d) Your Worship of God (Matthew 5:23-24)

Matthew 5:23-24

23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

James 3:9-10

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.

I. The Nature of the Tongue

II. The Power to Destroy

- a) Your Relationships (Proverbs 16:27-28)
- b) The Church (2 Corinthians 12:20)
- c) Your Testimony to the Lost (Colossians 4:5-6)
- d) Your Worship of God (Matthew 5:23-24)

III. God's Redemption of the Tongue

James 3:2

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.

Matthew 12:36-37

36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,
37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Romans 8:1

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

James 3:9-10

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.

Psalm 19:14

Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

