

**Series: The Letter of James**  
**Sermon: Taming the Tongue**  
**James 3:1-12**

**Introduction**

One of the ways the living faith we learned about in Chapter 2 is demonstrated is by how we can control what we say. In the opening verses of Chapter 3, James makes an observation about the greater accountability of teachers and the difficulty of not stumbling.

1. He believes teachers and leaders must take their responsibilities seriously because their accountability is greater, and they will receive a \_\_\_\_\_ judgment.
2. The words of Jesus and James remind us that being leaders in God's church is more than having natural or even spiritual gifts; there's the added dimension of appropriate \_\_\_\_\_ and right living.
3. We all \_\_\_\_\_ in many things.
4. Yet he did not \_\_\_\_\_ his or our stumbling.
5. We should all press on to a \_\_\_\_\_ walk with the Lord, marked by *less* stumbling.
6. To not stumble in word shows true spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.

**I. The Power of the Tongue**

7. If we have \_\_\_\_\_ over our tongue, it indicates we have \_\_\_\_\_ over ourselves.

8. The bit and the rudder are \_\_\_\_\_ but extremely important.
9. James says that it is possible for something as small as the tongue to have tremendous \_\_\_\_\_ for either good or evil.
10. James points us towards allowing the Spirit of God to work through us with a \_\_\_\_\_ hand on the reins and rudder that is our tongue.
11. The bitter pain of words spoken against us can hurt us for a \_\_\_\_\_, long after a broken bone has healed.
12. The tongue can either control or \_\_\_\_\_.
13. The truth is the bridle, the rudder, and the fire can all do tremendous \_\_\_\_\_ when they are used correctly.
14. There aren't many sins that don't involve \_\_\_\_\_ in some way.

## **II. The Difficulty of Taming the Tongue**

15. A wild \_\_\_\_\_ can be more easily tamed than the tongue.
16. It's true, that no one can tame the tongue, but when it is brought under the \_\_\_\_\_ and control of the Holy Spirit, it can be tamed.
17. Speaking whatever comes to mind is \_\_\_\_\_ and can be deadly if it's filled with poisonous speech.

### III. The Contradictory Character of the Tongue

18. The tongue can be used for the highest \_\_\_\_\_ (to bless God), and it can be used for the lowest evil (to curse people).
19. Our speech should be \_\_\_\_\_ and glorifying to God.
20. Like a spring of water, our mouths shouldn't send forth fresh and \_\_\_\_\_ from the same opening.
21. Jesus taught that a person's words reliably \_\_\_\_\_ their inner character.

### Conclusion

22. Under the Holy Spirit's control, the tongue becomes a powerful \_\_\_\_\_ for good.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ words can turn defeat into victory, sadness into joy, despair into hope.
24. A lot of good can be accomplished if we simply develop the \_\_\_\_\_ of sharing with others something good that we see or hear about them.
25. All of us can be more \_\_\_\_\_ than we might naturally be by using our words in \_\_\_\_\_ ways.
26. The Lord wants us to \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts and mouths of hurtful speech.

It is for our own good and the good of others, as well as the Lord's reputation, that our hearts be cleaned up and our language reflects the cleansing. Ask the Holy Spirit to

pinpoint your weaknesses and strengthen you to overcome them.

### Answers

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|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. stricter  | 10. firm     | 19. consistent  |
| 2. character | 11. lifetime | 20. bitter      |
| 3. stumble   | 12. destroy  | 21. reveal      |
| 4. excuse    | 13. good     | 22. tool        |
| 5. better    | 14. talking  | 23. Encouraging |
| 6. maturity  | 15. animal   | 24. habit       |
| 7. control   | 16. power    | 25. positive    |
| 8. small     | 17. unwise   | 26. cleanse     |
| 9. power     | 18. calling  |                 |

### QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. What others say to us and what we say to others can last a long time, for good or evil. Has someone ever said something bad about you that still hurts today? What was it? Why does it still hurt? How has it impacted you?
2. Has someone ever said something encouraging to you that still helps you today? What was it? Why does it still help you? How has it impacted you?
3. Our speech should be consistent and glorifying to God. How are you doing regarding controlling your tongue in ALL situations? What situations do you find it the most difficult to control your tongue? What can you do in these circumstances to allow the Holy Spirit to better take control of your tongue?