

August 30, 2020

The Bridge Bible Fellowship

Pastor Paul S. Brown

James 3:1-12

“Guard Your Tongue!” – Part 3

VII. Guard Your Tongue!

A. Your Tongue Denounces You (1-2)

B. Your Tongue Directs You (3-5a)

C. Your Tongue Defiles You (5b-6)

D. Your Tongue _____ You (7-8)

E. Your Tongue _____ You (9-12)

So What?

Discussion & Application:

1. Give some examples of how your tongue has guided you in the past. Give examples of when / how you have allowed the tongues of others to guide you. What are some reasons why this happens? What can we do to make sure our tongues are guiding us in a godly direction?
2. In James 3:7-8, reference is made to the creation and the fall of man. According to God's plan in creation, what are some things we are supposed to do with our tongues? What did the fall of man do to man's use of the tongue? What examples do we see in Gen. 3-4? What happened in the fall of man that impacted the way people speak? Read Rom. 3:10-23. What fruit of the tongue does Paul refer to as proof that man is a sinner?
3. James 3:7-8 tells us that man has tamed other creatures (see Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8:6-8), but no one can (is able to) tame the tongue. "**Tamed**" = to subdue; curb; subjugate; bring under control for one's purpose (see Mark 5:4 for only other place the word is used in the NT). James describes the tongue as "**restless**" (unstable – cf. James 1:8; fickle; unreliable) "**evil**" (base; degrading; prone to injure). The picture is of a caged but unsubdued wild animal pacing up and down waiting for the chance to attack. It is also "**full of deadly poison**" (see Ps. 58:1-5; 140:1-3; Rom. 3:10-14). What attitude would you take toward a wild animal or a poisonous snake being loose in your house? How alert / vigilant would you be to its deadly presence? Do you take the same approach with your tongue? If not, why not?
4. James 3:9 speaks of the inconsistent (unstable; restless) use of the tongue. What is the contrast between "**blessing**" and "**cursing**"? Verses 10-12 give analogies from the natural world. How does our tongue **define** who we really are spiritually regardless of what we claim to be?
5. If no human can tame the tongue, then only God can. The first step in God controlling the tongue is to repent of living life your way, place your trust in Jesus Christ and the price He full payment He made for your sins on the cross, and give Him control of your life (salvation – be born again – new heart). Have you taken that step? If not, please take that step right now. If you take that step, please let one of our pastors know so we can help you grow in your relationship with God.
6. Since the tongue expresses what is in the heart / mind (Mt. 15:17-20), what can we do to transform our hearts / minds? (See Rom. 12:1-2, then find other passages of Scripture that address the need to be changed in our heart / mind) What role does meditation on Scripture have in transforming our hearts / minds? How much time do you dedicate on a daily / weekly basis to meditating on Scripture?
7. Nobody is perfect; especially at taming the tongue. But can you look back at your life and see "progress" toward godliness in the use of your tongue? Is it obvious to others that you are changing? Is there evidence that God is changing your heart by what you say? If so, give Him praise and keep growing. If not, ask Him for forgiveness and pray that He will make you more sensitive to what you say and how you say it.
8. James makes it obvious that the battle with the tongue will last a lifetime, and we cannot take a day off in our efforts to tame it. What is your plan going forward to give control of your tongue to the Lord? To whom will you be accountable?
9. If you haven't already done so, **memorize James 3:1-12** and quote it in the morning, at noon, and at night every day this week. Don't forget to review the first two chapters. Ask the LORD to transform you by the renewing of your mind and tame your tongue so that it demonstrates a living faith.

Am I Being Transformed?

Guard Your Tongue!

James 3:1-12

¹ Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

² For we all stumble in many *ways*. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

³ Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

⁴ Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.

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.

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. 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* saltwater produce fresh.

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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.

Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:6-8

Tamed:

to subdue; curb; subjugate; bring under control and continue to restrain; to control for one's purposes

⁸ But no one can tame the tongue;
it is a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison.

Restless = unstable; inconsistent (cf. 1:8)

Evil = base and degraded; prone to injure

Full of deadly poison

Ps. 58:3-5; 140:1-3

Ps. 39:1 – “I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle....”

E. Your Tongue Defines You (9-12)

Cancel Culture!

⁹ With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

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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* saltwater produce fresh.

With it we bleſs *our* Lord and Father

With it we curse men,
who have been made in the likeness of God

From the same mouth come both
blessing and cursing

(see Mt. 15:11, 20; John 7:47-49; 1 John 4:20-21)

My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

Does a fountain send out from the same opening
both fresh and bitter *water*?

Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives,
or a vine produce figs?

Nor *can* saltwater produce fresh.

Matthew 12:33 (NASB95) – “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.

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Excuses won't hold up when we stand before God.

Matthew 15:17–20

So what?

1. Guard Your Tongue!

2. Get ready for a lifelong battle.

3. Strive by the power of the Holy Spirit to have your tongue consistently represent who you really are:
a child of God.

4. It doesn't matter how others define you or how you define yourself. God is the One who will ultimately define you and determine that you are or you are not His child.

5. If your tongue is revealing your true heart and you see that you are not truly a follower of Jesus, then **turn from your sins and trust in Jesus.**

Romans 10:9–10 (NASB95) – ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.