

James – The Power of the Tongue Js. 1:26

Introduction:

Our tongue is a very important part of our bodies. In our tongue we possess a great power. We can choose to do good or to do evil. We can choose to encourage others or break them down. Our tongue is very powerful.

It is no wonder that James says, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; {20} for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (Js. 1:19-20).

In fact, there are many thoughts on the tongue throughout the Bible. Paul says, “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Col. 4:6).

Also, Pr. 17:27-28 - He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. {28} Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

Today, we will also notice also James 3:1-12 as we deal with “The Power of the Tongue”

Today, we will notice the following about our tongue from James 1:26.

- I. Our tongue can be used for good and evil.
- II. We must work at controlling our tongue.
- III. If we fail to bridle our tongue, our religion is useless.

I. Notice the way our tongue can be used

- A. This can be for good and bad things.
 1. Pr. 10:19-21 - In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise. {20} The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little. {21} The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.
 2. Pr. 18:21 - Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.
- B. Notice some of the good things that our tongue can do.
 1. We can **preach** the word of God.
 - a. Ps. 119:172 - My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness.
 - b. I Pet. 4:11 - If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.
 - c. II Tim. 4:2 - Preach the word!
 2. We can **speak of the righteousness of God**.

- a. **Ps. 35:28** - And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long.
3. We can **confess Christ**.
 - a. **Mt. 10:32** - Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.
 - b. **Rom. 10:9-10** - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
 - c. Even on the Day of Judgment, everyone will confess Christ.
 - 1) **Rom. 14:11** - For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."
 - 2) **Phil. 2:9-11** - Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, {10} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, {11} and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
4. We can **praise God** with our tongue.
 - a. **Ps. 100:1-2** - Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! {2} Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.
 - b. **Heb. 13:15** - Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.
5. We can **encourage** others.
 - a. **Acts 13:15** (to Paul in Antioch of Pisidia) - And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."
- C. However, the tongue can also do very evil things.
 1. **I Tim. 5:13** - And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also **gossips** and busybodies, **saying things which they ought not**.
 2. **Eph. 4:29** - Let no **corrupt word** proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.
 3. **Js. 4:11** - Do not **speak evil** of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.
- D. We need to understand that our tongue is very powerful and has the power to do good or evil.
 1. Notice what James compares our tongue to (**3:1-8**).

- a. Bit in horses' mouth's (3:3).
 - b. Small rudder (3:4).
 - c. Little fire that starts a forest fire (3:5).
 - d. "Full of deadly poison" (3:8).
2. We need to know that our tongue can do good for others, or it can do evil; but it cannot do both.
- a. **Js. 3:9-12**
 - b. Notice what Jesus says.
 - 1) **Mt. 12:33, 35** - Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. {35} A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.
 - 2) **Mt. 7:18** (Jesus is not speaking directly about the tongue, but the same principle applies) - A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.
- E. Our tongue is powerful!
1. We can use that power for good.
 2. However, we can also use that power for evil.

II. Because of the power of the tongue, we must work at controlling our tongue.

- A. Notice again who James is speaking to (**1:26**).
 1. James is talking to people who think they are religious.
 2. He is not talking about those in the world; but rather he is talking to those in the church (US!).
 3. It is possible for those who think they are "religious" to be deceiving themselves if they do not control their tongue.
 4. This is why it is so important to control our tongue.
- B. It is not easy, but we all must try to control our tongue.
- C. We must put away the evil that is in our tongues.
 1. **Ps. 34:13** - Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.
 2. **Eph. 4:31** - Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.
 3. **Col. 3:9** - Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,
- D. We control our tongue by controlling our hearts.
 2. **Ps. 141:3-4** - Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips. {4} Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.
 3. Jesus teaches us that we speak that which we put into our hearts.
 - a. **Mt. 12:33-37** - Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. {34} Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

{35} A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. {36} But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. {37} For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

- b. **Mt. 15:18-20** (Jesus is asked about His disciples eating with unwashed hands) - **But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. {19} For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. {20} These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.**

- 4. We need to be careful what we put into our hearts.
 - a. We all need to follow the command of Paul.
 - b. **Phil. 4:8** - **Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things.**
 - c. We have to be careful as to what we allow in our hearts.

E. We must control our tongue.

I. Our tongue can be used for good or evil.

II. Because of the power of the tongue, we must work at controlling our tongue.

III. **If we fail to bridle our tongue, our religion is useless (1:26).**

- A. We are nothing more than a hypocrite if we cannot control our tongue.
 - 1. Notice again what James says about our tongue and its use (**3:9-12**).
 - 2. We cannot praise God and curse man.
 - 3. It is an either/or situation.
 - 4. Notice what Jesus says to the Pharisees.
 - a. **Mt. 15:7-9** - "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: {8} 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. {9} And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "
- B. In order to be pleasing to God, we must control our tongue.

Conclusion:

The tongue is only the symptom of the problem. The problem, or cause, is the heart. Today, is your heart right with God?