

SERMON OUTLINE

Today's passage is one of the most practical Scriptures in the Bible.

What's the one thing that destroys more marriages, wounds more children, ruins more churches and divides more countries than any other cause? The _____.

If we apply today's Scripture to our daily lives, there will be powerful positive benefits, including more kingdom impact. Souls are at stake!

Here's the theme verse:

[Jas 3:7-8 NIV] 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

In this passage are three tongue disorders to avoid.

I. THE KNOW-IT-ALL (3:1)

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

A. SCRIPTURE

Teachers will be strictly judged. By whom? James doesn't say but we know they'll be judged by their listeners and by God.

(1) By their students or "listeners."

(2) By God.

The Bible says God will judge you as you judge others. So don't be quick to become a teacher.

B. APPLICATION

(1) THE DISORDER: "KNOW-IT-ALL"

Even if you aren't an official teacher, we all want to be teachers and prove how much we know.

How did you respond the last time you were in a conversation and suddenly forgot what you were going to say?

If you are a professional teacher or preacher, you have it even tougher because it's tempting to believe people ALWAYS want to hear you pontificate!

(2) THE CAUSE: PRIDE

Parents must train, coaches must coach, and teachers must teach. But we are often in love with sharing our knowledge, and it's prideful. If you don't think this is you, try for one day not teaching anyone anything.

We feel like we must show our superiority, so we run our mouth. Ironically, the Bible says if you want to appear smart, do the opposite!

[Pro 17:28 NIV] 28 Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.

QUOTE: You can either keep mouth shut and have people think you're smart, or open it and prove you're not!

(3) THE CURE: PURSUE A HEART OF _____ AND TEACH LESS

Jesus said, "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matthew 12:34)

NOTE: If you've had a history of running your mouth as a know-it-all: To change your behavior, for a while, focus your spiritual disciplines on humility. Here are three books to consider studying:

- 1) *Inner Excellence* by Jim Murphy
- 2) *Humility* by C.J. Mahaney
- 3) *Unoffendable* by Brant Hansen (also podcast with same name.)

II. THE BLABBERMOUTH (3:2-8)

A. SCRIPTURE

2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

Note five analogies James uses to illustrate the power of the tongue.

(1) A bit in a horse's mouth.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

(2) A rudder on a ship.

4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts....

(3) A spark that starts a forest fire.

5b Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

(4) An untamable animal.

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind,

8a but no human being can tame the tongue....

(5) Deadly poison.

.8b ...It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

“Sticks & stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Is that true?

B. APPLICATION

(1) THE DISORDER: THE BLABBERMOUTH

You might be a blabbermouth if...

- You have foot-in-mouth disease.
- Your friends say you have no filter.
- You’re not good at keeping secrets.
- You’ve often blamed alcohol for your inappropriate words.

(2) A COMMON CAUSE: ALCOHOL

(3) THE CURE: STAY SOBER AND TALK LESS

[Eph 5:18 NIV] – 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit...

III. THE CURSER (3:9-12)

A. SCRIPTURE

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

Analogy #1:

11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

Analogy #2:

12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?

(Repeating Analogy #1...)

Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

B. APPLICATION

(1) THE DISORDER: THE CURSER

Understand: We’re not talking about a mouth that says curse words. We shouldn’t use perverse language, but that’s a different topic. James is talking here about cursing people, as in “putting a curse” on people. The word means to call down curses on someone. It’s the opposite of words of blessing. (Rom 12:14 commands, “Bless and do not curse.”) You can use your words to bless people or curse people.

[Pro 18:21 NIV] 21 The tongue has the power of life and death...

There are life words and death words!

(2) THE MOST COMMON CAUSE: ANGER

Earlier in James we read:

[Jas 1:20 NIV] – 20 ... human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

Again remember the words of Jesus: “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” When our anger is out of control, it is because of a heart of pride. Your words are a window into your soul. That’s why the Bible says to get rid of your anger:

[Eph 4:31 NIV] – 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

(3) THE CURE: OFFER FORGIVENESS, AND DON’T SPEAK WHEN ANGRY

NOTE: Almost always our anger is misplaced and comes from pride. In those rare instances when you must confront a wrongdoer and you’re angry:

- 1) Pray for wisdom.
- 2) Get advice.
- 3) Wait until you’re not angry.
- 4) Confront in love.

CHALLENGE

Notice the similarity in the solutions under all three disorders. Here’s an easy challenge: This week, try to talk a lot _____!

[Pro 10:19 NASB20] 19 When there are many words, wrongdoing is unavoidable, But one who restrains his lips is wise.

CONCLUSION:

The coach who found a way to bless kids even when he was frustrated would say, “You’re _____ than that!”

INVITATION

You can’t change on your own power. You need God’s help. Verse 8 of our text said, “No human being can tame the tongue.” You cannot turn this around on your own strength. But Jesus in you can. Here are perhaps the most life-giving words of all time:

[Jhn 3:16 NIV] – 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus wants to set you free from your labels and from your sin. He wants to make you new. He will forgive you, empower you, save you, and give you heaven if you trust in him. The Bible says there's one thing you must say with your mouth to be saved:

[Rom 10:9 NIV] 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Today: Turn from your sinful speech, confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, be baptized into him and be saved.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

- **Scripture:** James 3:7-8 (NIV) — *"All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."*
- **Discussion Question:** James uses strong language to highlight how untamable the human tongue is. Looking across the different speech habits mentioned in the message—being a know-it-all, a blabbermouth, or speaking in anger—which area do you find most challenging in your daily life, and why?

2.

- **Scripture:** Matthew 12:34 (NIV) — *"You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."*
- **Discussion Question:** Jesus teaches that our spoken words are ultimately a window into our hearts. When you pay close attention to what comes out of your mouth during a stressful day, what does it reveal about what might be going on inside your heart?

3.

- **Scripture:** James 3:5b-6 (NIV) — *"Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell."*
- **Discussion Question:** James compares words to a small spark that can set an entire forest on fire. How have you seen a single careless remark, overshared secret, or angry comment spark unexpected damage in a family, workplace, or friendship?

4.

- **Scripture:** Proverbs 18:21 (NIV) — *"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."*
- **Discussion Question:** What is the practical difference between simply avoiding negative speech and actively using your words to bring "life" to others? Who is someone in your life right now who could benefit from intentional words of encouragement this week?

5.

- **Scripture:** Proverbs 17:28 (NIV) — *"Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues."*
- **Discussion Question:** The sermon challenges us to simply "talk a lot less" this week. What makes holding our tongues so difficult when we want to prove a point, offer unprompted advice, or vent our frustration?

6.

- **Scripture:** Romans 10:9 (NIV) — *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*
- **Discussion Question:** Since no human can tame the tongue on their own, how does surrendering our lives and speech to Jesus change how we approach difficult conversations, anger, or the urge to run our mouths?