



Sermon Study Guide

The Tongue – James 3:1-12

March 12 & 13, 2016

Read Together

Read **James 3:1-12** as a group.

Big Idea

Control your tongue before it controls you.

Discussion Questions

1. What can you learn about people by listening to them speak?
2. List some of the sins of the tongue.
3. In your own words, how is controlling the tongue like using a bit in a horse's mouth, or using a rudder to guide a ship?
4. Read James 1:19. How does this important principle work in controlling the tongue?
5. Read James 3:5-6. What is the message here? How seriously do we take these verses?
6. Read Matthew 15:18-20. From where do the things we say come? Why is this important?
7. Read James 1:26. How does this verse make you feel? Do you have work to do here, or is it settled?
8. Read James 3:7-8. How can a person be so disciplined in some areas of his/her life and so uncontrolled in the things she/he says?
9. Read Matthew 12:33-37. Why should these words of Jesus sober us?
10. Do you think it's really impossible to "tame the tongue," as it says in verse 8? How would a person do this? If you tried to tame your speaking habits, how would you go about it?
11. Read James 3:9-10. Why is this true of Christians?
12. Read Ephesians 4:29. What are some practical ways we can build each other up?
13. How is your tongue a gauge of spiritual vitality?

Challenges

Memorization

Learn James 3:9–10. This isn't your normal type of memory verse, but it might prove helpful in real-life situations.

Stop-Phrase

When you find yourself speaking badly about someone, stop—in mid-sentence if you need to. Find a phrase to run through your mind in those cases. Maybe it's James 3:9–10. Maybe it's just "This should not be." Or maybe it's a more positive statement like "Bless the Lord, O my soul" or the prayer from Psalm 19:14.

Encouragement

Think of three people you can encourage this week, and then do so. Be as specific as possible. Can you bolster their confidence or their faith?

Thanks

Who has encouraged you in the past? Who has spoken words into your life that truly helped you? Can you find them and thank them for that?

Media Fast

Many of us learn unkind habits of communication from talk radio, cable news, or online videos. If this is a problem for you, engage in a "fast," abstaining from those media sources for a period of time—perhaps the next seven days. Then re-evaluate.