



Taming the Tongue

James 3:1-12

October 4, 2026

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 salt water produce fresh.

Pastor Vaughn

1. The importance of having a controlled tongue
2. The dilemma: the tongue is humanly untameable
3. The solution: the Christian must gain and keep control of his tongue with the Lord's help

Two instructions:

- bring God's Word to bear on the problem

- walk by the Spirit

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's sermon. Thoughtfully writing out the answers to these questions will help to drive home the point of today's study. It is also helpful when you are able to discuss your answers with others. For more information about Koinonia Groups at Heritage Church that utilize these questions as the basis for their discussion, please see Pastor Vaughn or e-mail Vaughn@hcgj.org.

1. Why is it so important for the Christian to gain and keep control over his tongue?
 - In what ways can our words be used for good?
 - In what ways do we often use our words for evil?
2. According to the message, what does James mean in v. 2 when he says, "If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man?"
3. Why is our speech, good or bad, a reliable indicator of the level of our maturity in the faith?
4. James says in v. 6 that an uncontrolled tongue "defiles one's entire body (life)." How does it do this?
5. According to the message, how does an uncontrolled tongue "set on fire the course of our life?"
6. Why do you think that we cannot tame the tongue on our own?
7. What spiritual disciplines would you recommend to a new believer to help him understand how to gain and keep control of his tongue, and why?

Here are some resources that may assist you in a deeper study of the truths presented in today's sermon. While Pastor Vaughn cannot endorse every concept presented in each book, he does believe these resources will be helpful in profitably thinking through today's topic.

Blomberg, Craig L. and Miriam J. Kaele. **Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament V 16**. Zondervan 2008.
Hughes, Kent R. **James, Faith That Works**. Crossway, 1991.
Lenski, Richard C.H., **The Interpretation to the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James**. Augsburg Fortress, 1946, 2008.
MacArthur, John. **The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: James**. Moody Publishers, 1998.
Moo, Douglas J. **The Letter of James**. Intervarsity, 1985.
Varner, William. **The Book of James, A New Perspective**. Kress, 2010.
Zodhiates, Spiros. **The Work of Faith**. Eerdmans 1959.

Streaming of both the audio and video of today's sermon is available on the Heritage website (HCGJ.org) and App (Heritage GJ). The App can also be found on YouTube, RokuTV, AppleTV, GoogleTV, FireTV, and CarPlay. Podcasts for Heritage Church can also be found on your favorite provider.