

## **New Life Habits: Self-Talk**

**James 3:1-12**

**Week of September 27**

*As you enter into prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn't get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.*

*Be Still.*

Lord, open my heart and mind to hear and understand Your Word. I invite your Spirit to speak to me as I meditate on your Word.

Last week in the first chapter of James, our focus was obedience. Building an obedient heart and mind is possible when we create habits of Bible memorization that change who we are. We become what we focus on and meditate on. This week we build on this idea by focusing on our words. They are the outpouring of what is within our hearts and minds. Throughout chapter 1-2, James is pointing out the power of the tongue, but when he gets to chapter 3, he really hits it! We begin in chapter 3, verse 1.

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

<sup>9</sup>With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup>Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup>Can both fresh

water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

**Pause and Pray.**

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

**REFLECT.**

In the next few minutes, we invite the Spirit to be at work through these Scriptures. Use the following questions as prompts to reflect.

Like a bit in the mouth of a horse, or the rudder on a ship, the tongue is not a large part of who we are physically, but where it leads, we go.

What I say directs my path, Lord. This is true not only with the things that I say to others, but the things I say to myself. Guide me to any self-talk this week that needs to be weeded out. Have I had negative thoughts about others that I didn't turn over to you? Do I have unforgiveness that needs to be laid down? Have I made judgements, even things that I said in my mind? Bring those to my mind now. (PAUSE)

Where this past week was my self-talk about myself not honoring to You, Lord? Have I spoken negatively about myself? You say in Your Word that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. You do not intend for me to be hateful to myself anymore than You want me to be hateful to others. Reveal any of these negative thoughts to me now so they can be turned over to You. (PAUSE)

Lord, You remind us that our yes and no is enough. We don't need to add on by swearing, or over-speaking and embellishing. Have I done this recently Lord? Maybe to impress, or make myself appear bigger or better than I am recently? Bring to mind any incidences where this was the case this week. (PAUSE)

Have I been dishonest with my speech this past week, God? Did I let fear or pride or something else get in the way of honesty? If so, bring that to mind now. (PAUSE)

**PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.**

Lord, in what you have revealed, I ask for your forgiveness. I lay before you any area of sin that came to mind. (PAUSE)

Lord, in your forgiveness, I rejoice. I receive your grace, your mercy, your forgiveness. I let the warmth of that reality wash over me, and I thank you. (PAUSE).

Lord, I lay before you now these areas where I need your movement. Areas where I need you to empower me, to take control of my tongue, and my thought life, my speech. (PAUSE).

Lord, I thank you in advance for what You will do, and I wait in eager anticipation to watch You move. (PAUSE)

**YIELD.**

I return now to the text:

<sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup> 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.

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As I yield to your will in my life this week, I ask you to bring to mind-is there anyone I have hurt with my words? (PAUSE)

Show me how to make it right, Lord. (PAUSE)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER.**

Lord, we want our words to bless, and not curse.

Make my tongue as powerful as the bit in the mouth of a horse,

And may it lead me to do good and bless others.

May it lead me in ways that bring mercy.

May my tongue spark joy and good-will.

May it spark truth and acceptance and comfort for those around me.

May it be tamed by your Spirit, and always obedient to your Spirit.

I want it to be harnessed in such a way that it serves You alone.

May I always have praise on my lips for You and refreshment for others, who are made in your likeness.

Make it so, Lord Jesus. Amen.