

Week 2 Sermon Series: Mind Revolution- Change Your Life

January 24, 2026

Opening Monologue

Welcome to the AVC APP, everyone! This is the Sermon and Commentary portion of the app. As you scroll down, you'll find spiritual insights, commentary, and devotional questions tied to this week's sermon. Enjoy, and dive in to be better equipped in God's Word.

Last week we kicked off a brand-new sermon series called "Mind Revolution" – Change Your Life. If you missed Week 1, here's the link https://youtu.be/tE-fC0k6Lj8?si=kLkR-BjJ_2WPhlmg. I highly encourage you to listen to that sermon—it lays the essential groundwork for everything ahead, including this Week Two's Sermon.

I truly believe that through the power of Jesus Christ and His Word, your life can be completely transformed.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2a

For real change to happen in your life... you must participate. It's not like saying a quick "now I lay me down to sleep" prayer and everything magically gets renewed in your mind—sorry, that's not how it works. You must be willing and open for Jesus to change your neurological pathways.

Neurological pathways are like rivers or canals that form in your brain. Over time, they deepen and become the default route for your thoughts, words, reactions, and habits. Listen to this powerful explanation from a scientific journal:

"Every thought, word, reaction, and habit travel along networks of neurons connected by synapses. When a pathway is used repeatedly —through repeated thoughts and emotions, or behaviors—it becomes stronger and faster, just like a river carving a deeper channel through

land. Over time, the brain defaults to these ‘routes,’ often without conscious effort. What we repeatedly think and do becomes the path our mind most easily follows—and eventually, what flows out of us.”

Whether we like it or not, the good, the bad, and the ugly from our entire lives are stored in the brain. Unfortunately, our words can become weapons, and we end up hurting the people we love the most. Jesus’ brother James puts it this way: “With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.” James 3:9-10

Join us this Sunday as we dive deeper into the Lord’s Word—so we can be better equipped to face our world and the challenges we come up against!

In Christ,
Rev. Brad Standfest

To Listen to this week's Sermon: “Week 2 Mind Revolution-Change Your Life” Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:

Web: <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

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Key Sermon Text

Proverbs 12:18 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%2012%3A18%20&version=NIV>

Proverbs 16:24 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%2016%3A24%20&version=NIV>

Proverbs 15:4 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%2015%3A4%20&version=NIV>

James 3:1-11
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%203%3A1-11&version=NIV>

Romans 12:2

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A2&version=NIV>

Luke 6:45

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%206%3A45&version=NIV>

Commentary, Spiritual Applications, and Theological Reflections

It Just Comes Out of My Mouth

Why do things just pop out of our mouths sometimes—and we instantly regret it? Or why do words catch us completely by surprise, as if they came from somewhere else?

The truth is, it doesn't come from nowhere. There is a lifetime of information stored up in our brains. Yes, the brain only weighs about 2.5 to 3 pounds, but it is an incredibly powerful machine that literally controls the functionality of the rest of our bodies.

All the experiences, beliefs, emotions, hurts, joys, and patterns we've accumulated over a lifetime form rivers in our minds. These neurological pathways are like well-worn river channels in the brain. Every thought, word, reaction, and habit travels along networks of neurons connected by synapses. When a pathway is used repeatedly—through repeated thoughts, emotions, or behaviors—it becomes stronger and faster, just like a river carving a deeper channel through land. Over time, the brain defaults to these “routes,” often without conscious effort.

Think of it this way: these pathways eventually come to an end. From a human perspective, they either go over a waterfall or flow into a larger body of water. In our lives, that “end” is our mouth. What flows out is the overflow of what has been stored and channeled deep within.

These well-worn pathways:

- Shape our speech — what comes out of our mouth is often the automatic result of neural routes formed by past experiences, beliefs,

and emotional patterns.

- Direct our reactions — stress, fear, joy, or patience trigger pathways linking the amygdala (emotion), prefrontal cortex (reason), and motor systems, determining whether we react impulsively or thoughtfully.
- Form habits and reflexes — the basal ganglia reinforce frequently used responses, making them feel “natural” or instinctive.

Taken all of this into consideration, is it any wonder that our mouths are like a river at times and overflow with the good, the bad, and the ugly?

Jesus' brother James describes this very reality:

“With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.” James 3:9-10

And then he drives the point home with vivid imagery:

“Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.”

James 3:10-12

The heart of the matter is what Jesus Himself taught: “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45

Here’s the miraculous part: our Lord has given us the ability to change these neurological pathways that flow out of our mouths. We no longer have to spew what we’ve been thinking or what’s been stored up for years.

Through the power of Jesus Christ and the renewing of our minds, we can be transformed.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Romans 12:2a

The same God who created our brains can redirect our rivers—so that what flows out of our mouths brings life instead of regret. (1, Rev. Standfest)

Words Are Emotions Speaking

Jesus' words are both simple and unsettling:

“For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45).

That is a bold statement. It forces us to confront the idea that our words are not accidents or isolated moments, but revelations. The heart—so closely connected to the mind—speaks from what overflows within it. What comes out of us is shaped by what has been poured into us.

If we speak from overflow, then we must also consider our inflow.

Over the course of our lives, we have received countless inflows—voices from parents, siblings, family members, friends, experiences, wounds, disappointments, and expectations. Some of those inflows were life-giving; others were harmful. Over time, these deposits can create what feels like a junkyard in the mind—layers of unprocessed thoughts and emotions stacked upon one another.

James, the brother of Jesus, offers a sobering reminder:

“We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check” (James 3:2).

None of us are perfect. We stumble—often with our words. And if the tongue reveals what is stored within, then the question becomes not merely How do I speak better? but What am I storing?

Within the storage of the mind and heart can live fear and worry, pride and bitterness, anger, doubt and unbelief, lust and impurity, envy and jealousy, condemnation and shame. When these remain unexamined, they eventually find expression. Words are emotions speaking. Overflow exposes content.

The apostle Paul offers direction when he urges believers to “take

captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is not denial or self-effort alone, but surrender. It is recognizing negative overflow and inviting Christ to overpower it with truth.

This requires humility. It asks us to stop trusting our own strength and to believe that transformation is possible—not because we are strong, but because Christ is. Scripture reminds us that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). Even the inner landscape of the mind is not beyond His reach.

The psalmist gives us language for this posture of surrender: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

This is not the prayer of the defensive, but of the surrendered—a humble invitation for God to do what only He can do: search, expose, cleanse, and redirect the deepest parts of us so that our words no longer wound, but heal and reflect His life. (1, Rev. Standfest)

Overcoming by Changing Your Atmosphere

How Atmospheric Strongholds Develop

- Personal Level: Lifelong inflows of harmful words, experiences, or sins (e.g., childhood exposure to yelling, vulgarity, or abuse) poisons the mind, creating "rivers" of toxic thinking that overflow into words and actions. Over time, these become fortified, making negativity feel "normal" or instinctive.
- Environmental Level: Homes, families, or communities can carry a pervasive "atmosphere" of confusion, perversion, or ungodliness, where demonic influences thrive and weaken believers.
- Broader Level: Cities or nations can have collective strongholds influenced by principalities in the "heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12), broadcasting lies through culture, media, or accepted sin.

Words have profound power—they shape our minds, influence our attitudes, emotions, and perspectives, and ultimately determine how we live our current and future

lives. The things we hear and absorb over time can either nourish our souls or poison them. When we are bombarded with overwhelming anger, rage, bitterness, or toxicity, these elements can overtake us, creating deep-seated patterns that feel inescapable.

Consider the impact of childhood experiences. If parents or caregivers constantly yell, scream, or use vulgarity and curse words, a child's mind becomes poisoned by those toxic inputs. These early exposures don't simply fade; they form lasting atmospheric strongholds—entrenched patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that persist into adulthood. Just as clouds and blue skies create the atmosphere around us, the spiritual and emotional environment we inhabit—shaped by words, experiences, and influences—becomes the “air” we breathe daily. Over a lifetime, toxicity builds these strongholds, hindering our ability to live freely in Christ.

The Bible speaks directly to this reality. The apostle Paul warns against conforming to the world's patterns and calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). Wayne Grudem, in his *Systematic Theology*, emphasizes that sanctification—a progressive work of God and man—makes us more free from sin and more like Christ, including in our thoughts and words. He notes that renewal involves the whole person, with our intellect and knowledge being renewed in the image of our Creator (Colossians 3:10). This transformation frees us from bondage to old patterns, allowing us to think God's thoughts after Him.

To move forward and possess the mind of Christ(1 Corinthians 2:16), we must intentionally change our atmosphere. This begins with humble surrender to God. **The psalmist prays:**

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalm 139:23-24

We invite the Lord to search us and remove atmospheric toxicity—to expose and uproot what has been built up over time.

We also cry out for inner renewal:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10

These prayers acknowledge that true change is God's work, yet we participate by seeking Him.

A powerful step is to proclaim the Word of the Lord out loud. Speaking Scripture declares God's truth over our lives and shifts the spiritual atmosphere. Galatians 5:1 declares: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

We can proclaim Romans 8:1-2: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

And 2 Corinthians 3:17 reminds us: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

By proclaiming these precious promises, we invite the Lord to bring freedom, displacing lies with truth and breaking strongholds.

Finally, we must surround ourselves with godly community. Scripture warns:

"Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" 1 Corinthians 15:33

Bad company can lead to temptation, reinforce strongholds, and perpetuate toxic atmospheres. Conversely, fellowship with mature Christian men and women builds us up, encourages renewal, and fosters an environment where the Spirit moves freely.

Overcoming begins with recognizing the atmosphere we've inhabited and choosing—through prayer, proclamation, and community—to let Christ transform it. As we renew our minds in His Word and invite His Spirit, old strongholds crumble, and we step into the freedom for which Christ has set us free. The same God who created the heavens and the earth can renew the atmosphere of our hearts and minds, leading us into abundant life.

(1, Grudem, Rev. Standfest)

King Solomon: Wisdom, Wealth, and the Weight of Glory

King Solomon stands in Scripture as a towering figure in Israel's history—the wisest, wealthiest, and most accomplished king the

nation ever knew. His reign marks a golden age of peace, learning, creativity, and prosperity, unparalleled before or since.

Wisdom Given by God

Solomon's greatness began not with ambition, but with humility. 1 Kings 3:9-12 "So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong... I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be."

God granted Solomon wisdom so vast that leaders from across the world traveled to hear him speak.

1 Kings 4:34 "Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom."

A Mind That Shaped Culture

Solomon's wisdom expressed itself through writing, music, and deep observation of the created world.

1 Kings 4:32-33 "He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plant life... and he also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish."

- 3,000 proverbs — distilled wisdom for everyday life
- 1,005 songs — artistic, poetic, and theological expression
- Biblical books traditionally attributed to him include Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs

In modern terms, Solomon was a philosopher, scientist, songwriter, and statesman combined—a one-man center of learning and culture.

Wealth on a Scale Hard to Imagine

Scripture records Solomon's annual gold income with remarkable precision.

1 Kings 10:14 "The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents."

- 666 talents \approx 25 tons of gold per year
- At modern gold prices, this equals approximately \$1-2+ billion USD annually
- This figure excludes silver, spices, precious stones, tributes, and global trade revenue

1 Kings 10:21, 27 “Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value... The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones.”

By today's standards, Solomon's yearly gold income alone would place him among the wealthiest individuals or nations in the world.

Builder of God's House and a Kingdom

Solomon's wealth fueled massive construction projects that shaped Israel for generations.

1 Kings 6:1 “Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem.”

He built:

- The First Temple — the dwelling place of God
- His royal palace and the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon
- Store cities, fortified cities, and national infrastructure

1 Kings 9:19 “He built store cities, and towns for his chariots and horses—whatever he desired to build.”

Military Strength and National Security

Solomon's reign was secure and well-defended.

1 Kings 10:26 “Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses.”

In modern equivalence:

- 1,400 chariots resemble a large armored military division
- The logistical and economic scale compares to billions of dollars in defense capacity

Yet despite this power, Israel experienced peace.

1 Kings 4:24-25 “During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel... lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree.”

A Cautionary Ending

Scripture does not hide Solomon's failure.

1 Kings 11:4 "As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God."

Solomon's life teaches a sobering truth: Wisdom does not eliminate temptation. Wealth does not guarantee faithfulness. Success must be stewarded with devotion.

Scripture concludes that reverence for God outweighs every achievement.

Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge."

Solomon's life stands as both a pinnacle of God's blessing and a warning to guard the heart, reminding us that the greatest success is not what we build—but whom we remain faithful
(Logos Bible Facts)

Theological Reflection on the Power of the Tongue in Proverbs 18:21, 12:18, 16:24, and 15:4

The book of Proverbs, attributed largely to King Solomon, repeatedly emphasizes the profound influence of our words, portraying the tongue as a tool that can either foster life, healing, and wisdom or inflict destruction, pain, and division. These four verses form a cohesive tapestry on this theme, drawing from the wisdom literature's focus on righteous living under God's sovereignty. Drawing from Dr. David Guzik's *Enduring Word* commentary and insights aligned with the Life Application Study Bible (which stresses practical, everyday application of Scripture), we can reflect on how these passages reveal God's design for speech as a reflection of the heart (cf. Matthew 12:34), urging believers to align their words with His character of truth, grace, and restoration.

1. Proverbs 18:21 - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

- **Guzik's Insight (Enduring Word):** Guzik notes that this proverb

extends the idea from the prior verse (18:20), where speech provides for one's needs. Here, the tongue's scope broadens to encompass "death and life"—not just material provision but existential impact. Words can destroy relationships, reputations, or even spirits, or they can build up, encourage, and sustain. Those who "love" their speech (i.e., indulge in it carelessly) will reap consequences, good or bad, like eating fruit from a tree they've planted.

- **Life Application Perspective:** The Life Application Study Bible often highlights how this verse calls for intentionality in communication, especially in modern contexts like social media or family dynamics. Rash words can lead to relational "death"—broken marriages, estranged friendships, or emotional wounds that fester. Conversely, life-giving words affirm identity in Christ, offering hope amid despair. Practically, this means pausing before speaking (or posting) to ask: "Will this build life?" It echoes James 3:5-6, where the tongue is a "fire" that can ignite destruction, reminding us that our words have eternal echoes, accountable before God (Matthew 12:36-37).
- **Theological Reflection:** This verse underscores human agency under divine oversight. As image-bearers of a God who spoke creation into existence (Genesis 1), our words carry creative or destructive power. Theologically, it points to the Fall's corruption of speech (Genesis 3:4-5, the serpent's deceit) and redemption through Christ's words of life (John 6:63). In application, believers are called to "eat the fruit" of wise speech, cultivating habits like gratitude and encouragement to reflect God's life-giving nature.

2. Proverbs 12:18 - "There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

- **Guzik's Insight (Enduring Word):** Guzik describes the "one who speaks" as someone with a harmful ability to stab and slice with words, causing deep emotional cuts instead of restoration. In contrast, the wise use their tongue to promote health, acting as a balm for wounds. This highlights the tongue's dual potential: as a weapon or a remedy.

•** Life Application Perspective:** Emphasizing real-world scenarios,

this proverb warns against “rash words” in arguments, gossip, or criticism, which can scar like sword thrusts—think workplace conflicts or parental rebukes that crush a child’s spirit. The Life Application approach encourages “healing” through active listening, empathy, and affirmation, modeling Christ’s compassion (e.g., His gentle words to the woman at the well in John 4). Practically, it advises replacing sarcasm with sincere compliments or using Scripture to uplift, turning potential harm into growth.

- Theological Reflection: Here, wisdom is tied to righteousness, contrasting the fool’s destructive folly with the wise person’s redemptive speech. Theologically, it evokes the piercing of Christ on the cross (Isaiah 53:5), where suffering led to our healing. Our words should mirror this: not wounding but mending, pointing others to the ultimate Healer. In daily life, this means confessing hurtful speech (James 5:16) and seeking the Holy Spirit’s guidance for words that align with God’s restorative kingdom.

3. Proverbs 16:24 - “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”

- Guzik’s Insight (Enduring Word): Guzik points to the cultural significance of honeycomb as the sweetest delight in ancient times, symbolizing how gracious words bring blessing and vitality. There’s “wonderful power” in speech to uplift, nourishing both soul and body, as seen in biblical examples like Jonathan’s renewed strength from honey (1 Samuel 14:27).
- Life Application Perspective: This verse is often applied to encouragement in relationships—spouses affirming each other, parents praising children, or friends offering support during trials. The Life Application notes link it to holistic health: kind words reduce stress, foster community, and even aid physical well-being (cf. Proverbs 17:22, “A cheerful heart is good medicine”). In practice, it challenges us to make “pleasant words” a habit, like daily compliments or notes of thanks, countering a culture of negativity.
- Theological Reflection: Theologically, this portrays words as sustenance from God’s provision, akin to manna or the “milk” of His Word (1 Peter 2:2). Honey’s sweetness reflects the joy of salvation (Psalm 19:10), inviting us to speak grace that revives the weary soul.

In a broken world, such words embody the gospel's sweetness, drawing others to Christ's living water (John 4:14) and promoting shalom—wholeness in body and spirit.

1. Proverbs 15:4 – “A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”

- Guzik’s Insight (Enduring Word): Guzik explains the “wholesome” (or gentle) tongue as a perpetual source of life, like a fruitful tree providing shade and nourishment. Perverse words, however, “break the spirit,” causing harm we underestimate. Our speech’s power for good or ill is immense, far beyond what we realize.
- Life Application Perspective: Focusing on emotional and relational health, this proverb warns against “perverse” speech like deceit, exaggeration, or cruelty, which can shatter confidence or trust. The Life Application encourages “tree of life” language in mentoring, counseling, or evangelism—words that sustain like eternal life in Eden (Genesis 2:9). Practically, it means guarding against negativity in conversations, instead offering hope that “revives the spirit” in trials.
- Theological Reflection: The “tree of life” imagery harkens to Eden and Revelation (22:2), symbolizing eternal blessing through wisdom (Proverbs 3:18). Theologically, a gentle tongue reflects God’s tender mercy (Psalm 103:8), while perverseness mirrors sin’s fracturing effect. In Christ, who is the true Tree of Life, our words can participate in His mission to bind the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1), fostering spiritual vitality in community.

James 3:1-11

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

In this chapter, James’s immediate concern is with the speech of false teachers who are ruining believers with their uncontrolled tongues. From that immediate concern he launches into the wider area of the use of speech among believers.

In the early church, teachers were very important. Both the survival and spiritual depth of believers depended on them. In the church at Antioch, they were ranked in status with the prophets who sent out

Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1). Teachers were the point of contact for all new believers because converts needed instruction in the facts of the gospel, and teachers would build them up in the faith. The problem, however, was that some teachers had the ability to communicate but were driven by very worldly motivations. They would take leading positions in a church, form cliques, and use their teaching positions to criticize others. In this way, they could maintain their position and importance.

Chapter 3 is an elaboration of 1:19, “slow to speak.”

Christians need constant diligence and discipline. Nowhere is this more necessary than in the use of the tongue. Christians need help from God to speak wisely. All believers should take this chapter to heart, not just leaders and teachers; all Christians need to control what they say. And all types of speech, private and public, need to be brought under Christ’s control. The only sure cure for selfishly motivated teaching and speaking is true repentance. This involves being honest and humble before God and admitting our sins (4:6-10). Only then will we be able to avoid sinful speech and bring healing to the Christian community.

3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers. James taught that people should not rush to be teachers. Many of his status-conscious readers would have desired the reputable position of teachers in the community.

What was so attractive about being a teacher? Becoming a rabbi or teacher was the highest calling of a Jewish child. Teachers had great influence and status in the early church (Ephesians 4:11). Because teachers were rare, each teacher had much work to do, and teaching was central to the work of the church. Because teachers taught primarily through verbal communication, it was vital for them to control what they said. Through their positions, teachers could present wrong doctrine. They could also create divisions in the church by promoting themselves rather than the message of Christ.

That some will presume they are teachers is implied but not actually stated by the text. Coming hard on the heels of chapter 2, one of the most honorable “works” that would immediately come to the Jewish mind would be the position of teaching. James has in mind a greater emphasis on spiritual growth and self-control before someone

assumed the role of a teacher.

We who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Teachers will have the greater judgment. Teaching authority carries with it greater responsibility. As works reveal the depths of a person's faith, so words show the depth of a person's maturity. The teacher is held to greater accountability because of his or her key teaching role (Luke 12:42–48). James is not against teachers; instead, he is alerting us to the great responsibilities that go with teaching and its potential problems. James valued the ministry of teaching, but he knew that its social attractiveness and power made teaching potentially dangerous. The desire to be in the spotlight as the spokesperson and authority was a problem then as it is now. We must help immature and undisciplined speakers grow before we give them platforms. We must help new Christians grow in knowledge and make sure they possess in their personal experience what they profess with their words before we give them positions of influence and up-front public speaking opportunities.

3:2 We all stumble in many ways. We all make mistakes or slip up when we are off guard. We all stumble, but our most frequent failures occur when we are speaking. To "stumble" means to go astray or sin. The fact that we all sin in many ways is illustrated frequently in the Bible (see 2 Chronicles 6:36; Psalm 19:13; Proverbs 20:9; Romans 7:14–16; 1 John 1:8, 10). Because we are prone to make mistakes in our speech, we need to be even more careful to let God control what we say. He is capable of guiding our motivation, our thoughts, our very choice of words, and even the impact our communication has on others.

The ease with which we all stumble is James's second reason for cautioning those who want to teach. The first was the weight of greater responsibility. Teachers are not just people who are mature enough not to stumble—they also ought to be those who correctly handle their failures. Believers are frequently guilty of putting immature Christians (for example, newly converted celebrities) into positions of authority and then being disappointed when these young believers are not able to live up to the expectations placed on them.

If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect

man. Perfect here means mature or complete. Many people may think that it is impossible to control the tongue, but most people haven't even begun to try. The ability to control the tongue is the mark of true maturity for the Christian (see 1:19, "be slow to speak"). When Jesus confronted the religious leaders about their accusations against him, he said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks—showing that what is inside of a person affects what they do with their speech (Matthew 12:33-37). He also said that we must give account for every careless word we utter (Matthew 12:36). (See Proverbs 15:1-4 for more on how a mature person controls his or her tongue.)

Able to keep the whole body in check. The expression in check (chalinagogesai) means "to bridle," which introduces the analogies James uses next. James is saying that anyone who can control his or her mouth will be able to control the rest of his or her body. The wisdom and love from God and the self-restraint given by the Holy Spirit will help us exercise this control.

One of the greatest forms friendship can take is the willingness of one friend to correct with compassion the speaking of the other. When someone points out something wrong we said, or a hurtful way of speaking, our first response may be defensive. But we must learn that a true friend cares for us, including the way we talk. Are we willing to genuinely care for that person in the same way?

3:3-5 Bits ... Rudder ... Tongue ... What do these things have in common? They are all small but very effective controllers—they each direct something much larger than themselves. James is building a case for the damaging power of our words. We see this evidenced in history when dictators such as Adolph Hitler, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Joseph Stalin, and Saddam Hussein used their words to mobilize people to destroy others. We see it evidenced in church splits and in the ruining of a pastor's reputation. And we see how verbal abuse in the home can destroy the very personhood and character of spouses and children.

3:3 Bits ... make them obey us. If a person's impulsive speech is uncontrolled, his or her whole life is headed in the wrong direction.

Horses are larger and stronger than people, but they can be turned with a small bit in the mouth. We should let Christ bridle our mouths instead of speaking out every time a thoughtless word comes to mind. From this point on, James shows that not only teaching, but all forms of speech can be powerfully beneficial or destructive.

3:4 Ships ... are so large. Ships were some of the largest and most powerful man-made structures known by early Christians. Ships moved tons of cargo across the sea. Reminding his readers that a large and powerful oceangoing vessel could be controlled by a small rudder, James drives home the point of how powerful and pivotal the tongue can be. In our time we have seen how oil spills from large tankers can cause billions of dollars of damage, all because of an uncontrolled rudder. Small things control much. The use of the tongue has split churches and destroyed lives. We can use our speech in impulsive, automatic, and thoughtless ways, lashing out at others and passing on gossip. Without control, destruction is sure to follow.

ARE YOU UNDER CONTROL?

What we say and what we don't say are both important. Proper speech is not only saying the right words at the right time, it is also controlling our desire to say what we shouldn't.

Examples of an untamed tongue include: gossiping, belittling, cursing, bragging, manipulating, false teaching, exaggerating, complaining, flattering, and lying. Before speaking we should ask, "Is this what I really want to say? Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?"

In Colossians 3:5-11, Paul associates eliminating sins of speech with the stripping off of the old self. This can only be accomplished by God working in us.

3:5 The tongue is a small part of the body. As the bit, the rudder, and the spark, the tongue is a small but influential part of the body. Since the mouth reflects and directs our life-style, we must learn to control it. Anything capable of such great evil must also be capable of great good. Paul taught that the whole body, including the tongue, ought to be considered a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) to God.

A great forest is set on fire by a small spark. During the dry season in Israel, the grass, low thornbushes, and scrubs were as dry

as explosive tinder. One spark could spread a wild fire. The first two analogies (bit and rudder) were directed at the tongue's effect on the person. The spark analogy speaks to the effect of the tongue beyond the person. This illustrates the following warnings:

- Our words have wide-ranging impact. They are able to kill at a distance. Not only do they hurt people face-to-face, but like long-range missiles they can be launched from a remote conversation, or like mine fields they can be planted to do their damage much later. Innuendo may be regarded as fact. Juicy tidbits may be repeated and cause their damage long after they are started.
- We can't control the effects of our words. In tinder dry conditions, a forest fire can quickly burn out of control. Likewise, a rumor can take off and take on a life of its own. We must carefully monitor what we say.

Satan uses the tongue to divide people and pit them against one another. Idle words are damaging because they quickly spread destruction. We dare not be careless with our words, thinking that we can apologize later, because even when we do, the damage remains. A few words spoken in anger can destroy a relationship that took years to build. Remember that words are like fire; they can neither control nor reverse the damage they do. For example, a public figure's reputation can be greatly harmed by a quote taken out of context or a false allegation.

3:6 A world of evil. The tongue is the source of all kinds of evil because of the damage it can cause in the world and bring to the rest of the Christian community.

WORD PICTURES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR SPEECH

In James 3, several word pictures are used to show the importance of mature speech.

BIT A small bit controls a large animal..... Can we control our use of the tongue?

RUDDER A small piece of wood steers a huge ship in heavy wind..... The tongue, though small, can create grave consequences.

FIRE A small spark unleashes a destructive force..... Do we recognize the destructive force our words can have?

ANIMALS People can tame animals..... Can we tame our speech and our impulsive thoughts?

POISON The venom of a snake kills its prey..... Can we keep our words from poisoning us and others?

SPRING A spring can produce only one kind of water..... Is our speech a spring that's good or foul?

FIG TREE Trees bear just one kind of fruit..... Is our speech bearing good fruit, or is it mixed with bad?

TONGUE The tongue can be used for good or evil..... Does our speech reflect our Christian maturity?

Sets the course of nature. The uncontrolled tongue can set our entire human existence on fire. The NRSV translates “the course of nature” as “the cycle of nature” (literally, “the wheel of being”). The expression was used in ancient times to indicate “the ups and downs in life,” as well as one’s entire human existence.

This means that the tongue can destroy all the good that we’ve built up over a lifetime. While we have ministered for years and years and seen abundant fruit, if we fail to control the tongue, we can undo all the good we have built up in our years of ministry. Our speech has a power that few other capabilities possess.

Set on fire by hell. The verb implies habitual action. In other words, the tongue keeps on setting on fire and inflaming our passions. It inflames our temper; it leads us to actions that are displeasing to God. Even intelligent people can behave like fools when reacting to unthoughtful criticism. They become inflamed by the use of the tongue.

Flames of hate, prejudice, slander, jealousy, and envy seem to come from the very lake of fire where Satan will be punished (see Revelation 20:10, 14-15 for more on the lake of fire).

WHAT IS HELL?

“Hell” in Greek is gehenna. Gehenna was named after the Valley of Hinnom, a spot just south of Jerusalem where the garbage was burned, and where human sacrifice had been made (2 Kings 21:1-18). Constant fire represents eternal punishment; thus Gehenna is the same as “the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:10, 14-15). Gehenna is not the same as Hades, which is the place where both good and bad went after death. Gehenna is also mentioned in Matthew 5:22.

3:7 All kinds of animals ... have been tamed by man. Genesis 1:28 states: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’ ”(NIV). Genesis 9:2 says: “The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands”(NIV). Psalm 8:6-8 also echoes the fact that God has given dominion to humanity over all the animals. Human ingenuity has tamed wild creatures to make them useful. But no person, by his own unaided power, can restrain the tongue.

3:8 No one can tame the tongue. Proverbs 13:3 says, “He who guards his lips guards his life.” So what hope is there for taming the tongue? We are helpless ... unless we get help.

No person can tame the tongue, but Christ can. To do it, he goes straight for the heart (Mark 7:14-15; Psalm 51:10) and the mind (Romans 12:1-2). We should not try to control our tongue with our own strength; we should rely on the Holy Spirit. He will give us increasing power to monitor and control what we say. For when we feel offended or unjustly criticized, the Spirit will remind us of God’s love and keep us from reacting. The Holy Spirit will heal the hurt and keep us from lashing out. We can make sure we are in the Spirit’s control by incorporating Scripture into our life and by asking the Spirit to direct our thoughts and actions each day.

A restless evil. Restless means unstable and incapable of restraint. The tongue is always capable of evil; it remains untamed throughout life. With our tongue we can lash out and destroy. By recognizing the

tongue's deadly capacity, we can take the first steps to keep it under control.

Full of deadly poison. What we say can be dangerous and deadly, carrying poison that drips long after the words are spoken. David said in Psalm 140:3, “They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent’s; the poison of vipers is on their lips.”

EXCUSES FOR SPEAKING YOUR MIND

Contemporary wisdom says that people should assert themselves and say what they really feel; speak out, rather than stifle. There are many rationalizations for the unrestrained use of the tongue. We say:

- “Somebody had to tell him off.”
- “It was good to get it off my chest.”
- “I sure gave her a piece of my mind.”
- “Maybe what I said will do him some good.”
- “I felt better for saying it.”

Instead of making excuses for sounding off, we can exercise restraint and allow God’s peace and wisdom to guide what we say.

Our society encourages us to speak out in a thoughtless way, totally disregarding the deadly impact our words may have. Christ’s attitude is for us to deal with our anger and frustration honestly and maturely but to use restraint in how we reveal these feelings to others.

3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father. Praising God or blessing was a normal daily practice for Jews and Jewish Christians, thus using the tongue to curse others should have seemed abnormal. The blessing of God was a common practice in Jewish devotional life. “The Holy One, Blessed is He” is one of the most frequent descriptions of God in rabbinic literature. The “Eighteen Benedictions,” a liturgical formula used daily by righteous Jews, concluded each of its parts with the blessing of God. Lord and Father is used only here in the New Testament. Paul’s favorite reference to God was “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3).

We curse those who are made in the likeness of God. We should have the same attitude of respect for fellow human beings as we have for God, because they are created in his image. Yet we have this horrible, double-sided tongue.

Some people think that the only restraint against foul talk, calling people names, and bad language is social disapproval. But God's Word condemns it. James says that the reason we should not curse people is because they have been made in God's likeness. We should not use any word or name that reduces them to anything less than their full stature as God's created beings. The doctrine of "total depravity" doesn't mean that the image of God is obliterated in a person, but only that every aspect of our being is affected by sin. There is still something in the sinner worth saving. That is why Christ came to die.

3:10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. James knew that followers of Christ might be capable of both praise and cursing because of what he had observed in the disciples. Peter promised Christ, "I will not deny you" (Matthew 26:35 NRSV), but then he denied Jesus with oaths and curses (Matthew 26:69-75). In 1 John 3:18, the apostle John says, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (NIV). Earlier in his life, John was willing to call down fire to destroy a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56). Because speech reveals a person's heart, it exhibits the same potential to help or destroy. The tongue reflects the inner person (Matthew 12:34).

The deceitful, dual use of the tongue is the result of double-mindedness, fickleness, and the instability of a life that is ruled by impulse rather than by the love of God. The tongue reveals either maturity or immaturity. It gives a picture of our basic human nature, made in God's image but fallen into sin. God works to change us from the inside out. As the Holy Spirit purifies our heart, he gives us self-control so that we will speak words that please God. Instead of fighting, we need to be helpful, positive, and encouraging toward others.

3:11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? James pictures the inner being, the heart, as a spring. Jesus used the same illustration in his conversation with the Samaritan woman: "But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14 NIV). There were many springs and wells throughout the ancient land of Israel.

Luke 6:45

Scholarly Commentary on Luke 6:45: The Overflow of the Heart

Luke 6:45, situated within Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20–49), serves as a climactic statement in a section emphasizing ethical discernment, judgment, and the authenticity of discipleship. The verse reads: "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of" (NIV). This pronouncement draws on imagery from the natural world—trees and their fruit (Luke 6:43–44)—to illustrate a profound anthropological and theological truth: human speech and actions are not arbitrary but inevitable outflows of one's inner character. By integrating insights from the Life Application Bible Commentary (which emphasizes practical living), David Guzik's Enduring Word Commentary (focusing on devotional and theological depth), and I. Howard Marshall's New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC) on Luke (highlighting exegetical and theological precision), this commentary explores the verse's meaning, context, and implications. Where relevant, parallels from Jesus' other teachings (e.g., Matthew 12:34–35 and 15:18–19) are incorporated to enrich the discussion, as these amplify the theme of the heart's role in moral expression.

Exegetical Analysis: The Greek Text and Literary Context

I. Howard Marshall, in his NIGTC on Luke, approaches the verse with meticulous attention to the Greek text, underscoring Luke's distinctive theological emphases. Marshall notes that Luke 6:45 functions as an explanatory conclusion (*gar*, "for") to the preceding parable of trees and fruit, linking inner disposition to outward manifestation. The key term "treasure" (*thēsauros*) evokes a storehouse or repository, implying accumulated content—either "good" (*agathos*) or "evil" (*ponēros*)—that is "brought forth" (*propherei*, a verb suggesting production or emission). Marshall highlights the chiastic structure in

the verse: good man/good treasure/good production // evil man/evil treasure/evil production, culminating in the proverbial axiom “for out of the abundance (perisseuma) of the heart (kardia) the mouth speaks.” This “abundance” denotes overflow or surplus, drawing from Semitic wisdom traditions (cf. Proverbs 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it”). 29

Marshall situates this within Luke’s broader narrative, where the Sermon on the Plain contrasts with Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount, presenting a more concise, ethically oriented discourse aimed at disciples amid a diverse crowd (Luke 6:17-19). He argues that Luke’s version emphasizes radical discipleship in a hostile world, where true followers are distinguished not by external piety but by internal transformation. The “heart” here is not merely emotional but the center of volition and moral agency in Jewish thought (Deuteronomy 6:5; Psalm 51:10). Marshall cross-references this to Luke’s unique parables, such as the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), where compassionate action reveals a renewed heart. He cautions against over-allegorizing the imagery, insisting that Luke’s intent is theological: human evil stems from innate corruption (echoing Jeremiah 17:9), yet redemption through Christ offers renewal (cf. Luke 1:77-79; Acts 15:9, where the heart is purified by faith).

Complementing Marshall’s exegesis, David Guzik in his *Enduring Word* Commentary stresses the verse’s proverbial force, noting that “words are an inevitable outflow of one’s inner being.” Guzik points to the absence of neutrality: “Not to have good fruit is to have evil: there can be no innocent sterility in the invisible tree of the heart.” Quoting Adam Clarke, he adds that fruitlessness equates to barrenness fit only for judgment (John 15:2-6). Guzik connects this to the preceding verses on judgment (Luke 6:37-42), arguing that self-examination of one’s “treasure” precedes any critique of others, lest hypocrisy undermine discipleship.

The *Life Application Bible Commentary* (drawing from the *Life Application Study Bible* notes) bridges exegesis to praxis, observing that “the origin of our words is found in our heart. Our mouth gives us away by revealing our true feelings.” It interprets “treasure” as life’s accumulated inputs—experiences, teachings, and choices—that shape output. This practical lens aligns with Marshall’s emphasis on Luke’s theological message of renewal, urging readers to audit their

“storehouse” through Scripture meditation (Psalm 119:11: “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you”).

Theological Implications: The Heart as the Locus of Moral Reality

Theologically, these commentators converge on the verse’s revelation of human nature and divine expectation. Marshall underscores Luke’s Christocentric anthropology: Jesus, as the ultimate “good man” (Luke 18:19), embodies perfect alignment between heart and speech (Luke 4:18–19; John 7:46: “No one ever spoke the way this man does”). Yet, humanity’s default is the “evil treasure,” inherited from the fall (Genesis 6:5; Romans 3:10–18). Marshall ties this to Luke’s soteriology, where salvation involves heart-circumcision (Luke 1:16–17; Acts 2:37–38), enabling believers to produce good fruit through the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). He contrasts this with Pharisaic externalism (Luke 11:39–41), where clean outsides mask corrupt hearts.

Guzik amplifies this by linking Luke 6:45 to the broader sermon, where Jesus demands radical love (Luke 6:27–36) as evidence of a transformed heart. He warns of self-deception: “Hypocrisy arises from ignoring personal faults while critiquing others,” echoing Jesus’ speck-and-plank analogy (Luke 6:41–42). Guzik invokes the storm-tested house parable (Luke 6:46–49) as the sequel, where obedience to Jesus’ words proves the heart’s foundation—rock (good treasure) versus sand (evil or empty).

The Life Application perspective adds a devotional layer, emphasizing that “our words also defile and condemn us” (Matthew 12:36–37). It encourages proactive heart-guarding: filling the “treasure” with God’s Word to counter cultural toxins. This resonates with Jesus’ parallel teaching in Matthew 12:34–35: “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.” Here, Jesus confronts the Pharisees’ venomous words as symptomatic of unregenerate hearts, reinforcing Luke’s point that speech betrays allegiance—either to God or to evil.

Further enriching this, Jesus’ words in Matthew 15:18–19 expand the scope: “But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from

the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.” Marshall would note the Lukan parallel in themes of defilement (Luke 11:37–41), while Guzik sees it as a call to holistic sanctification. The Life Application urges believers to confess and renew (James 3:5–12), transforming defiling speech into edifying words (Ephesians 4:29).

Practical and Ethical Applications for Discipleship

In synthesis, these commentaries portray Luke 6:45 as a diagnostic tool for spiritual health. Practically, the Life Application advises self-reflection: “If we really want to change what’s coming out of our mouths, we first have to focus on changing our hearts as He helps us.” This involves daily disciplines like prayer (Psalm 139:23–24: “Search me, God, and know my heart”) and community accountability. Guzik applies it to interpersonal dynamics: Before judging, examine your words—do they build up or tear down? This prevents the blind leading the blind (Luke 6:39). Marshall, with his theological bent, views it as missional: Renewed hearts produce evangelistic fruit, aligning with Luke’s emphasis on the gospel’s universal reach (Luke 24:47).

Ultimately, Luke 6:45 confronts us with the inescapability of revelation—our words betray our hearts. Yet, it offers hope: Through Christ, the “evil treasure” can be redeemed (Ezekiel 36:26: “I will give you a new heart”). As Marshall concludes in his broader commentary, Luke’s Gospel invites transformation, where disciples, empowered by the Spirit, overflow with goodness that glorifies God and blesses others. 20 This integrated perspective not only elucidates the verse but equips believers for authentic living in a world desperate for genuine fruit.

Resources: Rev. Brad Standfest (1), Logos Bible Program, Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, Guzik, David. 2013. Romans. David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible, Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1992. Romans. Life Application Bible Commentary, Barton, Bruce B., and Philip Wesley Comfort. 1995. Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson. 1992. Romans. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. Guzik, David. 2013. Romans. David Guzik’s Commentaries on the Bible. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

Barton, Bruce B. 1994. Galatians. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. James. Life Application Bible Commentary., IL: Tyndale House Publishers. Howard Marshall, in his NIGTC on Luke, The Complaining Cure- Author and Pastor Bill Wahl, Good and Angry- Dr. David Powlison, Stop Your Complaining- Author and Pastor Ronnie Martin.

Sermon Notes:

Good Morning Everyone... Welcome to our Online Family & Friends...

Last week we started a powerful series I fully believe will change your lives... Our series is titled: Mind Revolution – Change Your Life (If you missed Week 1, you should really listen to it as it laid the foundation). You can listen to Week One on any of our AVC Connections... YouTube, App, Facebook/Website.

[Let's Pray]

Mind Revolution – Change Your Life...

In order for change to occur in your life... you must participate... You must be willing and open for Jesus to literally change your neurological pathways...

Yes... You have what I call rivers/channels in your minds that flow to the opening—(Explain briefly: like pathways that get deeper with repeated use).

[PP Pic of Brain]

[PP Pics of Niagara Falls]

Listen to this quote from a scientific journal that explains neural pathways:

“Every thought, word, reaction, and habit travels along networks of neurons connected by synapses. When a pathway is used repeatedly – through repeated thoughts and emotions, or behaviors – it becomes stronger and faster, just like a river carving a deeper channel through land. Over time, the brain defaults to these ‘routes,’ often without conscious effort. What we repeatedly think and do becomes the path

our mind most easily follows – and eventually, what flows out of us.”

[PP Pic with Words]

Whether we like it or not... the good, bad, and ugly from our whole life —childhood until now—is all up here...

Unfortunately... our words can be used as weapons... And we can hurt the people we love the most...

Let me help you identify strongholds that can be or are forming in your mind...

Friends... I am just giving you a heads up... This is some real & raw truth...

[PP] If you're a know-it-all... and everyone else is wrong and you're always right. If you're complaining, arguing, and accusing more than you're praising... If you're tearing down more than you're building up... If you're gossiping & slandering more than you're praying & encouraging... You need to repent...

According to the Bible, Solomon was the wisest man to have lived...

How did Solomon get his wisdom?

God actually said to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:5 – “At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’”

What would you ask for? LOL – Show me the money!

- Solomon asked for wisdom.

Listen to what's accredited to Solomon's wisdom:

Solomon authored 3,000 proverbs and composed 1,005 songs, showcasing his extraordinary God-given insight. His annual income included 666 talents of gold—equivalent to roughly \$1-2 billion annually in modern terms. Beyond this, he amassed immense riches through international trade with nations far and wide, establishing a vast network of commerce. He accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses, maintaining armories and storehouses brimming with

treasures. Kings, queens, and rulers from across the world journeyed to Jerusalem to hear his teachings on natural science—he spoke knowledgeably about plants, animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. As a global statesman and scholar, Solomon's fame drew visitors seeking his wisdom. And this is just a glimpse—Solomon built the magnificent Temple in Jerusalem, a wonder of the ancient world, crowning his reign of peace, prosperity, and unparalleled splendor.

I'm going to share a few passages Solomon wrote about the use of our mouths...

Proverbs 18:21 – “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

- Some people are eating your fruit.

Proverbs 12:18 – “The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Proverbs 16:24 – “Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”

Proverbs 15:4 – “The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.”

You know who does a commentary on the wisdom of Solomon & the power of our words? Jesus' brother James.

[PP] Read James 3:1-11

My Grandpa John was an ornery mean man... But out in public he appeared to be a clean-cut Christian...

[Short story of G. John- He did repent and come to Jesus]

Hear this Word!

[PP] Words are emotions speaking.

Question: What's caught up in the brain to cause us to act out verbally?

[PP Pic of Brain with Words Inside]

Fear, Worry, Anger/Bitterness, Lust/Impurity, Condemnation, Pride, Doubt/Unbelief, Envy/Jealousy.

Words are emotions speaking...

Jesus said this: [PP] Luke 6:45 – “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

In conclusion here is the Good News of Jesus—JESUS!

Our brains and emotions are repairable through the power of Jesus Christ our Lord... (Details last week)

[PP] Romans 12:2 – “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Let me give you some quick spiritual applications for our tongue improvement:

[PP Spiritual Applications for Tongue Improvement]

- Ask the Lord for wisdom to help you overcome strongholds.
- Ask JESUS to renew and transform your neurological pathways.
- Repent—Ask for forgiveness from God & others and start afresh.

Devotional Questions

The Power of the Tongue and the Heart’s Overflow

1. James 3:2 says, “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.”

In what areas of your speech do you most often “stumble”? How does acknowledging that no one is perfect in this area bring humility and dependence on God rather than discouragement?

2. James 3:5-6 compares the tongue to a small spark that sets a great forest on fire.

Think of a time when a few careless words caused significant harm—either to someone else or to yourself. What does this imagery teach you about the destructive potential of even small, unchecked words?

3. James 3:9-10 highlights the inconsistency: “With the tongue

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

How do you see this contradiction playing out in your own life (e.g., praising God in worship but speaking harshly at home or work)? What does this reveal about the condition of your heart?

4. Luke 6:45 declares, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart... for the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

If your words are a direct overflow of what's stored in your heart, what do your recent conversations reveal about what you've been filling your heart with? Be specific.

5. James 3:7-8 says the tongue is "a restless evil, full of deadly poison" and that "no human being can tame the tongue."

How does this honest assessment of the tongue's power make you more aware of your need for the Holy Spirit's control rather than relying on your own willpower?

6. Both passages emphasize that our words reflect our inner reality—whether good fruit from a good heart or poison from an untamed tongue.

What practical steps can you take this week to "store up good" in your heart (e.g., Scripture meditation, prayer, forgiveness, gratitude) so that your words naturally reflect Christ more?

7. James 3:11-12 uses natural illustrations: "Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, this should not be."

In what situations do you find yourself speaking in ways that are inconsistent with who you are in Christ? How can inviting God to search and purify your heart (Psalm 139:23-24) help bring consistency between your faith and your speech?