

The Challenges with Tongue Taming

James 3:1-12

James Primary Focus

Orthodoxy (right beliefs/doctrine)

vs.

Orthopraxy (right conduct/actions)

Proper Confronting → vs. 1 & 2

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

A small thing has a big impact: Vs. 3-5

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 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. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

Small things: Big impact



What's James' point?

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. 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. 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.

What does a “corrupt” tongue that look like for us today as Christians?

- **Usual suspects** -- cursing, lying, insulting, yelling in anger at others, manipulating, distorting the truth by sharing half-truths
- **More nuanced, subtler versions** – gossip, triangulation, defensiveness, assumicide
- The tongue as reflective of something else

Others who dealt with this issue of our tongues

- Solomon – Prov. 10:19 and MANY others
- David – Psalm 141:3
- Jesus – Matt. 15:11
- Paul – Col. 4:6
- Peter – I Peter 3:10

4 Guides for our speech with others

1. Take a reflective look inside – Using your tongue as the barometer of what's broken inside, what need of yours has yet to be more fully met by Jesus?
2. Love (being deeply for the person in lived out action -- Eph. 4:15, I Cor. 13) and Edification of others – **Eph. 4:29**
3. Speech that is an example to others – **I Tim. 4:12**
4. Radical dependence on the Holy Spirit *in the moment*

Small Group Questions

1. When you are called to confront others, how might you reflect deep care and humility?
2. Any thoughts about how your speech has reflected needs yet to be met by Jesus?
3. Regarding the 4 guides to a wise tongue – first reflect, love and edification of others, as an example to others, radical dependence on the HS – what comes most readily to you, and what do you struggle with?