



## No: 07 Tongue Tied?

### James 1:26 and 3:1-12

**"If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless" James 1:26**

James emphasises that real Christianity begins with faith but it must be accompanied by a consistent lifestyle. James, here, is dealing with a subject which we all, if we are honest, find difficult, the small muscle in our mouth. Each of us has our own agenda in life, and we find it very easy to say we have faith, but extremely difficult to put our faith into action. However, we should not give up, giving up is the easy way out, and does not allow the Holy Spirit to change us or our ways.

So if you have got to the point over the last few weeks when you have said to yourself that 'it is no use, it's all very well for these super-spiritual ones, but me, well, I will always be like this', then this is the time to take courage. Every one of us goes through these times. What makes the difference is a single decision which any of us can make.....We may fall but there is no disgrace in that. The devil would love to get you to give up. Don't let him. Instead, make that decision, Get up, say you are sorry to God and get going again. The **key decision** is to give the control of your tongue over to the Holy Spirit.

Firstly James talks to those whose work is words. He reminds us that we should only teach if we are anointed by God to be in that position, as teachers will be judged more strictly **James 3:1**. James gives several examples to show what a long lasting, far reaching effect, words have. They can be life changing, they can encourage, build up and tear down. Words affect the receiver and the giver.

### Bits to horses, James 3:3

A bit is placed into a horses mouth, and that allows something so small to control the direction of the whole horse. If the horse chooses to go against the pressure of the bit, and do his own thing there are very dangerous consequences, both for the horse and rider. We have not mastered self-control if we do not control what we say, **Proverbs 25:28**. If we want to be self-controlled we have to begin with our tongue, otherwise we could be in great danger, (**Proverbs 13:3; 18:21; 21:23**), as this protects our very life itself.

Like the bit, if obeyed can be used for such positive use. The horse can be trained to spin round on the same spot at just one very gentle touch from the master. Likewise with training we can use our tongues to speak faith words, creating, just like our Father does, **Mark 11:22-24**. We can follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and with one whisper from Him we can speak life changing words to a precious soul, **Proverbs 16:24**;

Stopping with one gentle touch on the bit is so easy, but if fought against can be so painful. So we have to learn that there are often times when we should **say nothing, Proverbs 11:12; 14:3; 17:28**.

### Rudders to ships, James 3:4

A ship is so large and can be moved along by a very strong wind and yet it's direction is determined by a very small piece of wood, a rudder. The tongue can be directed and it's direction depends on the purpose of the pilot. It can guide and control forces much stronger than itself. The wind of the Holy Spirit can blow on our lives (**John 3:8**) but the power of what we say can limit that power and bring our lives to a standstill, **Proverbs 13:3**. If the wind of the Spirit and the words of our mouth agree together then there is no stopping us as we grow in grace and the knowledge of our God, **Ephesians 4:13**. If we can control this small but powerful member, we can control the rest of our body. We will walk with the Spirit of the living God and we will see amazing things accomplished in our lives for God's glory. The tongue is a small part of the whole body but it makes great boasts (**James 3:5**) which can cause it much damage if allowed to be uncontrolled.

### **Spark to bush fires, James 3:5-6**

Bush fires are usually caused by a casual spark. They quickly run wild, totally out of control, damaging everything in their path with no desire to stop. The devastation left behind is catastrophic for the people who see what they care about being ruined. It is a devilish force accomplishing the will of another but unlike the ship it is a wildly unguided force once it has got hold and moving any way it chooses. So a casual word from the tongue can wreak havoc to a godly life, (**Proverbs 16:27**) both to the speaker and the hearer. It expresses our minds and our hearts.

All the nasty things in our imaginations, including anger, envy, jealousy, sexual thoughts and lying (**Romans 3:12**) can come out of our mouths and run like a bush fire and cause havoc when not controlled by the Holy Spirit. We repent of bad attitudes but forget to repent of the words from our mouth that perpetuate the wrong things in our heart. No amount of training will ever make us godly and clean up our tongue, **James 3:8**, it corrupts the whole person....full of deadly poison. The only answer is to yield to the Holy Spirit (**Romans 12:1-2**) When we are born again God has done divine surgery and taken out our heart of stone and given us a heart of love and obedience (**Ezekiel 36:26**) For this to be manifest in the way we speak we have to die daily (**Galatians 2:20**), and live our life in the body by faith in the Son of God who loves us so much He never speaks bad about us.

### **Fresh water or salt water? James 3:11**

Water is either pure or contaminated. There is no 'mostly pure water'. The tongue is not neutral; it is either blessing or cursing. No amount of self-effort or strong will can change this; one cannot live alongside the other. What we speak is an indicator of what is in our heart, **Matthew 12:34**. If our praise to God is tainted by our uncharitable speech to others it is no longer pure praise. When we become Christians we long for 'streams of living water to flow out of us' **John 7:28** to all those we want to reach with the gospel.

If we want our words to really reach into their lives with power to see them changed, we need to be walking in purity with holy speech, **Colossians 4:2-6**. A salt stream cannot produce fresh water, **James 3:12**. Salt is for preserving, we do not want to be involved in preserving the old we want to be into the fresh new mercies of God every morning, **Lamentations 3:23**. We choose to be wholeheartedly in the Kingdom of God, we cannot afford to be polluted by the world, **James 1:27**.

### **Figs or grapes? James 3:12**

"What goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean' **Matthew 15:11, 16-20**. We spend so much time caring about our outer concerns, when all the time God is dealing with the inner man as this will then change what we speak about, as that is what makes us unholy.

Fruit trees should bring forth their own good fruit. The words that come out of our mouth are like seeds, and they will all bear fruit when planted in the soil of peoples' hearts. Our words ought to please God. Remember that every thought and word is being examined by God and we have to give account one day, **Matthew 12:36; Hebrews 4:13**. If we spend our time gossiping we will not be able to bear true fruit in our lives, **Proverbs 11:12-13; 15:1,28; 16:28** A tree that does not bear the right fruit dies, **Matthew 3:10**.

We have the key in this tiny muscle to be powerfully used of God. As we fill our hearts with the Truth from the Word, meditate on it day and night, then it will flow out of our inner most being like the Niagara Falls and bring life to everyone who hears and receives it. **The Word in our mouth is as powerful as God's Word in Jesus' mouth, Hebrews 4:12**. Our words will be living, food to the hungry, restoring to the hurting, healing to the sick, (**Proverbs 12:18; 15:4**) revelation to the spiritually blind, and freedom to the oppressed, **Isaiah 61:1-3**. Our words are also weapons of attack against all the strategy of the enemy, Satan. Like with every good soldier we have to know the workings of our weapon and be able to use it well in order to have great success. This comes with practice, so stop reading about it and just do it.

## The Real Church Home Challenges 07

1. Have you changed your behaviour towards certain people as a result of the previous module on favouritism?

### **Read the notes about the different activities of the tongue.**

2. Can you see what a powerful weapon your tongue is? Is there an area of your life where it is under control? Is there an area of your life where it is like a bush fire causing havoc?
3. What positive things can result from our words?
4. Having looked into the Word what do you believe you need to do to change things in your life and/or relationships? How are you going to do this?

### **Read James 3:13-18**

5. Can you name the two 'wisdoms' James talks about? Where do they come from?
6. James asks us if we are wise and understanding. What is the mark of a person who is wise and full of understanding?
7. According to the criteria explained in **James 3:13**, how would you categorise yourself?
8. In **James 3:14**, James instructs us not to harbour two things in our hearts. Name them.
9. Why should we not boast about them or deny the truth?
10. In **James 3:15** it states that this is not really wisdom at all. Where does it come from? Who is the cause of it?
11. Wherever there is envy and selfish ambition, what else does James say you will find?  
**James 3:16**

- 12.** Are there any areas in your home or personal life in which this instruction from James could apply? What do you intend to do about it (them) and when? Remember, God sees the intentions in your heart, so be honest with Him.
- 13.** In contrast, where does true wisdom come from, and what is its main characteristic? Who is its Author?
- 14.** Name the seven other characteristics of true wisdom.
- 15.** Does this wisdom prevail in your home life? If not, read the verses again, then go back to Q5, and ask God what you can do to change the situation.
- 16.** What type of seed will a person who is full of God's wisdom plant? **James 3:18** What sort of person does James say sows this seed? What sort of harvest will that person reap?
- 17.** The type of harvest you reap is primarily dependent upon the type of seed that you sow then on the diligence with which you tend it, **Galatians 6:7-8**. If you cannot remember the type of seed you sowed, look at the harvest. Are you entirely satisfied with your crop? What do you intend to change as a result of studying these verses? (if you are not sure look at the fruit of the Spirit)
- 18.** Do you need to rip out any useless crop, and change your '*weed*' supplier (Satan) for the only Supplier of '*seed*' which yields an abundant crop (God)? Do you intend to do anything about it right now? If so what?
- 19.** Sum up what you have learnt from this lesson in one sentence.
- 20.** Memory verse: 'For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice' **James 3:16**