



JAMES 3:1-10

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.

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. 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.

EPHESIANS 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

NOTE TO LEADERS

We have a baby dedication service on the 13th of November at 9am. Please encourage any families in your group wanting to dedicate their babies to sign up by sending an email to hello@cityhill.co.za

START TALKING

1. What was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?
2. Think about your most painful experiences. What was the cause? Was it because of something someone said or a physical injury?

START THINKING

1. Read James 3:3-6. James uses three examples (bit, rudder and spark) of something small that has an enormous influence on setting direction. Why does he emphasise the negative example of the fire so much more than the positive examples of the horse's bit or the ship's rudder?
2. What do you think James would have to say about the proverbial statement, "sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me"?
3. Read Ephesians 4:29. Take a moment to consider the type of words Jesus spoke. How would you describe His words? What power did they have, and what fruit did they bring about?

START SHARING

1. Share about a time when you wished you could take back your words. In what situations do you find your speech most out of character with who you really are? What is one practical thing you can do to become more aware of being "triggered" and choosing to respond differently in those sorts of situations?
2. On Sunday, Jax said that James challenges us with three things: speaking carefully, kindly, and less. Which of these do you find the most challenging? What is one step you will take to grow in that area?

START PRAYING

Lord, our tongues often get ahead of our minds and hearts. Please help us to notice when we're about to speak without thinking and to check our hearts. Please help us to be slow to speak and quick to listen. Fill us with Your Spirit so that the words we speak are filled with love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness and self-control.

START DOING

1. Spend some time reflecting on areas in your life where you're most tempted to lose control of your tongue.
2. Ask God to show you how you can redeem those moments so that your words are life-giving and encouraging.
3. Decide on some practical things you can do to submit your heart to God to shape the words that come out of it and start putting them into practice.



This Sunday, Jax shared a challenging message from James chapter 3 on taming the tongue.

We've all experienced those bouts of 'foot-in-mouth' disease where we wished we had a rewind button to take back our words. And what James has to say on this subject hits hard. He uses three powerful pictures to describe the potential that our tongues have.

In verse 2, he starts with this line: *We all stumble in many ways... We can relate to the fact that taming the tongue is not easy. He goes on to say that Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.*

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. James 3:3-5

The bit in a horse's mouth and the rudder of a ship are both small things, yet they have a huge impact. Our words - the words that we speak to others, about others, and even about ourselves - have incredible power and can impact the direction of our lives. We all know the saying, "sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never harm me", but none of us would dispute the fact that words are powerful! We can all think of examples in our lives where someone said something - a few small words even -but they have stayed with us. Years later, we still remember them because they made an impact.

And then, just in case James' first two pictures don't convince us, he gives us another one: *Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 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. James 3:5-10.

James is challenging us with three things:

1. Speak CAREFULLY

Treat our tongue like the dangerous power tool that it is. What we say really matters.

Even if we speak to ourselves, we should never underestimate the power of our words.

When we realise the weight our words carry, we are much more careful about what we say.

We have the potential to change the course of someone's life with our words.

2. Speak KINDLY

How much of what we say is negative, critical, unkind? Yet Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:29:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

And Luke says *For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.* Luke 6:45. There is clearly a direct link between what we say and the state of our hearts.

When our words are unkind, cutting or bitter, when we can't find anything good to say about someone or a situation, it's often because something is festering in our hearts. Something that we need to work through, forgive, or ask God to heal.

David prayed, *May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.* Psalm 19:14. How different would our lives be if we prayed this prayer every day?

For centuries, parents have tried all kinds of ways to adjust the words that come out of children's mouths with things like Tabasco sauce and soap, but there is nothing quite as powerful and able to bring about lasting change in our hearts than the Holy Spirit.

When He works in our hearts by adjusting, convicting us of things, and healing us, our words change.

If we want to change how we speak to people, we should start by talking more to the Father in Heaven about everything.

3. Speak LESS

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. James 1:19.

Many of us are guilty of being slow to listen, quick to speak and quick to become angry.

Most of the time, when we're quick to speak, it's because we're desperately trying to get our point across. We want to be heard, and most of the time, we think that if the other person just understood where we were coming from, they would realise that we're right.

Have you ever heard the saying, "do you want to be right, or do you want to be happy?" Sometimes we are so intent on winning the battle with our words that we lose the war. Our relationships and connection with others are way more important than being right or sharing our opinions. One of the best ways to become a good listener is by being quick to listen and slow to speak and by asking questions. When we ask questions, it's as if we are building a bridge and inviting the other person to walk across. We are creating an opportunity for connection and understanding. When we listen, we learn.

Jesus certainly asked a lot of questions of his followers and the people He came into contact with, and it definitely wasn't because He didn't already know all the answers. We can learn so much from Jesus, and we can certainly learn a lot from these verses in the book of James.