

The Tongue Can No Man Tame

I. Introduction:

A. It takes a great deal of self-control to not offend in word. If you can control your tongue you can control your whole body (**James 3:2**).

1. Self-control [temperance] is part of the growth process for all Christians (**II Peter 1:3-11**).

2. We should all realize that giving in to sinful desires is contrary to the will of God (**Romans 6:11-13** and **I Peter 2:11**).

B. Words can do much harm (**James 3:5-6**).

1. Death and life are in the power of the tongue (**Proverbs 18:7; 18:21**).

2. What we say will be brought into the Judgment (**Matthew 12:33-37**).

a. Consider the word translated “idle” [ἀργός]: “Inactive, that is, unemployed; (by implication) lazy, useless: - barren, idle, slow” (Strong’s # 692).

b. That word is translated “idle” (**Matthew 20:3, Matthew 20:6**, and **I Timothy 5:13**), “slow” (**Titus 1:12**), and “barren” (**II Peter 1:8**).

3. So, since words are going to be brought into Judgment (**James 2:10-12**) it is really important that we consider how to control those words.

II. Body: What Does **James 3:7-8** Teach?

A. Let’s think through a few key words in our study:

1. “Tongue” could mean the spiritual gift (**I Corinthians 12:10**). That would make no sense in this context. Speaking with the tongue however would make sense (**I Peter 3:10**).

2. The word translated “tame” appears in **Mark 5:4** and then in the two verses we are talking about (Strong’s # 1150).

a. Strong’s dictionary says: “A variation of an obsolete primary of the same meaning; to tame: - tame.”

b. Thayer’s lexicon says: “1) To tame; 2) curb, restrain.”

c. The English word means: “domesticate (an animal): wild rabbits can be kept in captivity and eventually tamed. • make less powerful and easier to control: the battle to tame inflation. • cultivate (land or wilderness)” (Oxford New American Dictionary).

3. The word translated “unruly” [ἀκατάσχετος] is defined as: “that can not be restrained” (Strong’s # 183; Thayer’s Greek Lexicon). *This Greek word only appears in **James 3:8**.

4. So, what happens if you let something loose that refuses to be tamed? What are we supposed to do realizing that behind our teeth and lips is an unruly evil full of deadly poison? Think of how a Psalmist talked of the tongue (**Psalms 52:2-4**).

B. You are supposed to guard your tongue (**Psalms 34:13, Psalms 39:1-2, and Proverbs 21:23**).

1. To be clear, your tongue will not control itself. You however, have the ability to control your tongue (**James 1:19; 1:26**).
2. You can refrain your lips (**Proverbs 10:19-20**).
3. You have to guard your whole mouth (**Proverbs 13:2-4**).
4. Realize this, Scriptures do not just speak of the tongue always in the negative (**Proverbs 15:4**).
5. We have to THINK before we open the barn door of our mouths and let that wild beast come out (**Proverbs 15:28**).

C. God expects us to control what we say and if we speak at all (**Proverbs 17:27-28 and Proverbs 29:11**).

1. We are to let no corrupt communication come out of our mouths (**Ephesians 4:22-31 and Colossians 3:8-10**).
2. We have to measure our words with the will of Christ (**Colossians 3:16-17**).

D. When it comes to what we say, the tongue is not the main focal point (**Luke 6:45**).

1. Think about how the fool speaks hastily from the heart (**Ecclesiastes 5:1-3**).
2. So, to keep your tongue and your words in line with the will of our Lord; be of an upright heart (**Psalms 15:2 and Psalms 32:11**).

III. Conclusion: Don't let your tongue run loose (**I Peter 3:9-10**)!