



# YOUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL!

What God says about what you say

IN Favor video teaching series

## #8. JAMES 3

<sup>2</sup> *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.* <sup>3</sup> *When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.* <sup>4</sup> *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.*

<sup>5</sup> *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.* <sup>6</sup> *The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.* <sup>7</sup> *All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,* <sup>8</sup> *but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

In this convicting passage the tongue is referred to as . . .

- The maker of great boasts
- A fire
- A world of evil among the parts of the body
- The corruptor of whole persons
- That which sets the whole course of one's life on fire
- Having itself been set on fire by hell
- The one thing on earth that is untamable
- An evil that does not rest
- Full of deadly poison



One of the most important points in this passage, and one easily overlooked, is the comparison made between the tongue and the bits of horses and the rudders of ships. All of the comparisons may be summarized as follows:

	This small object. . .	. . .in this much larger place. . .	. . .for this purpose/result
v. 3	<i>bits</i>	<i>in the mouths of horses</i>	<i>to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal</i>
v. 4	<i>a very small rudder</i>	<i>large ships, driven by strong winds</i>	<i>are steered wherever the pilot wants to go</i>
v. 5a	<i>likewise the tongue, a small part</i>	<i>the body</i>	<i>makes great boasts</i>
v. 5b	<i>a small spark</i>	<i>a great forest</i>	<i>is set on fire</i>
v. 6, 8	<i>the tongue is a fire, a world of evil</i>	<i>among the parts of the body</i>	<i>corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, is itself set on fire by hell, is a restless evil, full of deadly poison</i>

Steve Backlund says, “*We move in the direction of our words.* It’s like a rudder—it guides our life. What you’re speaking today is going to move you in that direction 5 years from now; it’s taking you there ... When I start speaking, it affects everything.”

Our words ... have an enormous impact on our spiritual condition. <sup>Pillar</sup>

Actions invariably follow words ... The desires and movements of the body are powerful, and yet they are actually controlled by a relatively small part. The tongue, that is, speech, is that part. The believing self within physically turns this way or that according to what the person thinks and says ... Although the self is involved when sin is committed, the tongue is what needs to be controlled. Although the tongue is small in size, its abilities are large. Some instrument must be used to rein it and guide it ... [It] all comes down to controlling speech. If speech has such control over the body, however, who can control speech? <sup>NAC</sup>

Words have the power to elicit action; indeed, the activity of speech itself interprets every other human action. There is no evil act that the tongue cannot tell, let alone initiate. <sup>NAC</sup>

“As the little world of man is an image of the universe, so the tongue is an image of the little world of man.” The tongue as the “small part of the body” is as a world of iniquity “among the parts of the body.” The tongue, then, is identified with—and in a sense is the vehicle of—a complete world of evil that resides among the members of man’s body. It tells lies, slanders someone’s name, kindles hate, creates discord, incites lust, and, in brief, gives rise to numerous sins. “There are few sins people commit in which the tongue is not involved.” <sup>Bengel</sup>

The tongue, by virtue of being the most difficult of all parts of the body to control, becomes the conduit by which all the evil of the world around us comes to expression in us. As Calvin puts it, “a slender portion of flesh contains the whole world of iniquity.” ... No other “member” of the body, perhaps, wreaks so much havoc on the godly life. <sup>Pillar</sup>

#### James 3 in *The Message*:

*3-5 A bit in the mouth of a horse controls the whole horse. A small rudder on a huge ship in the hands of a skilled captain sets a course in the face of the strongest winds. A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it! 5-6 It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell. 7-9 This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can’t tame a tongue—it’s never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer.*

THINK ABOUT IT ...



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