

Date: October 22, 2023
Series Title: Evidence of Genuine Faith: Faith That Works
Message Title: Control Your Tongue
Text: James 3:1-12

Seeing the progression of the letter:

James, Outline – DW Foster

- Our Connection to God Chapter 1
 - Connection that brings growth through trials 1:2
 - Connection that brings obedience to act 1:19
- Our Call to People – Chapter 1b -2
 - Seeing people through God’s eyes 1:27
 - Seeing people calls for us to act on our faith 2:14
- Our Course of Action – Chapter 3-4a
 - The actions we are called to do demand control over our speech 3:1
 - The actions we are called to do demand wisdom 1:13
 - The actions we are called to do demand for humble holiness 4:1
- Our Commitment to Dependence 4b-5
 - Dependence on the Lord for our Future 4:13
 - Dependence on the Lord for our Livelihood 5:1
 - Dependence on the Lord for our Peace 5:7
 - Dependence on the Lord for our Prayers 5:13
 - Dependence on the Lord for our Reconciliation 5:19

There are three major expressions of speech that shouldn’t exist in the speech of a Christian:

- Angry speech
- Gossip
- Coarse/idle speech

The actions we are called to do demand control over our speech.

Controlling the tongue is necessary to fulfill the Great Commission.

Matt. 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- to declare
- to praise
- to witness
- to teach

James 3:1-2

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

The Horse's Bit: To Guide One's Direction

James 3:3

If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

The Ship's Rudder: To Pilot Through Your Storm

James 3:4-5a

⁴ Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ^{5a} So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

Fire's Spark: To Ensure the Course of Life

The James 3:5b-6

^{5b} How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

Untamable: Only God Can Tame Our Tongue

James 3:7-8

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

James 3:2

And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

The Remedy: Choose the Use of the Tongue

James 3:9-11

⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Ways to check Your Tongue

Stay near to the heart of God

Prov. 4:23-24

²³ Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. ²⁴ Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you.

- If we seek the heart of God we will recognize brokenness in everyone.
- If we seek the heart of God we will recognize beauty in everyone.
- If we seek the heart of God we will have compassion for everyone.
- If we seek the heart of God we will operate with a heart of love.

Ps. 19:14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

- This is gained through consistent prayer and reading the Word

Displace Negative Influences with Positive

Phil 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- Fill your life with joyful things.
- Read encouraging literature.
- Watch uplifting shows.
- Memorize verses.
- Filled with good will produce good.
- Filled with angst will produce angst.

Follow God's Model for Communication

Transferring the way we communicate with God to the way we communicate with others

James 1:19-20

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Quick to hear: Listen to their Heart

- Two ears. One mouth
- There is a concern or a cry out from the other person that is deeper than words spoken.
- They may not be able to control their tongue. This is why you must not be combatant

Prov. 21:23

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.

Prov. 26:20-21

²⁰ For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.

²¹ As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.

Slow to Speak: Be Silent or Be Salve

- What we offer
 - Blessings from our mouth
 - Springs of life from our mouth
 - Comfort and gentle counsel over conflict and correction
- Will we serve or be served.
- Must we be heard?
 - At times Jesus "opened not His mouth."
 - At times, the disciples would have been better served to shut their mouths.
 - Peter – Holy words from the Father, rebuking words from the devil

- Not brooding, silent treatment

Col 4:6

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Slow to Anger: His Spirit Rules Your Spirit

- Anger is the response to our unmet expectations.
 - Selfish emotion
 - Rooted in ME
 - I want to be left alone.
 - I want to be heard.
 - I want to control the situation.
 - My passion...My desire
 - You walk in anger because of what is inside of you:
 - Your way
 - Your pain
 - Your judgment
 - You are not to be on the throne of others' lives.
 - You are not to be on the throne of your own life.
 - Selfless emotion
 - God's Heart
 - God's Word
 - God's Hands and feet in the moment
- Christ calls us to serve others
 - He would lead must be the servant of all
- Grow in the Spirit, or follow the flesh.
- The fruit of the Spirit

Gal. 5:22-24

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

These are the remedy for the poor use of the tongue...It is what is in you

Challenge

I will spend time in prayer and in the Word.

I will displace the negativity that I allow myself to read or watch with positive, life-giving things.

I will listen at least twice as much as I speak.

I will prayerfully and intentionally choose to show the fruit of the Spirit to myself and others.