



Life & Death: The Tongue (James 3:5-12)

A Tongue of Fire

Even so **the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.** See how **great a forest a little fire kindles!** And **the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.** The tongue is so set among our members that **it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. **But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.** With it **we bless our God** and Father, and with it **we curse men,** who have been **made in the similitude of God.** Out of the same mouth proceed **blessing and cursing.** My brethren, **these things ought not to be so.** Does a spring send forth **fresh water and bitter from the same opening?** Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? **Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh."** James 3:5-12 NKJV

James 3:5-12

- ☑ *“Even so **the tongue is a little member and boasts great things**. See how great a forest **a little fire kindles!** And **the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity**. The tongue is so set among our members that it **defiles the whole body**, and **sets on fire the course of nature**; and **it is set on fire by hell.**”*

James 3:5-6 NKJV

- ☑ **A tiny part of the body....**
 - ☑ A little organ... The average tongue is 4 inches long and weighs only a few ounces.
 - ☑ It is approximately 1/10th to 2/10ths percent of the weight of the entire body.
 - ☑ Yet, it is able to infect and control the entire body, and influence every situation.
 - ☑ It is so powerful that it can dictate the outcome of anything!
- ☑ **A small fire can incinerate an entire forest...**
 - ☑ Can you imagine if James was writing this today? I am sure he never saw something like we see today in, for example California, where a careless camper drops a match or leaves a campfire unattended, and a small ember lets a piece of glowing ash escape.

- ☑ It ignites and little bush and next we know is that thousands and thousands of acres are burned, as well as homes and cars, etc.
- ☑ **The tongue is that fire**
 - ☑ The tongue operates like that. It's a small matchstick or glowing timber that releases a small piece of glowing ash.
- ☑ **The Tongue is a world of iniquity**
 - ☑ Iniquity is sin. This small member has the ability to release sin from its root.
- ☑ **Function**
 - ☑ Because of its function, the is tongue is positioned in the body in such a way that it affects the whole being.
 - ☑ It is instrumental in forming words and it is the words that can speak either life or death. Why?
 - ☑ The power of creation is contained in words! (See The Power of Creation below).
- ☑ **The Tongue sets fire...**
 - ☑ The tongue is the match—the small flames that starts the fire!
 - ☑ Once that happens, the course of nature takes over. What is that course?
- ☑ **The Legal Universe**

- ☑ We live in a “legal universe!” What that means is that God’s laws, both spiritual and temporal (natural) are always active.
- ☑ You might say that the Bible teaches us God’s spiritual laws and also shows us how they affect or infect our physical reality. In other words, they manifest in the natural.
- ☑ But also, there are physical laws, like gravity, which play out in the natural, no matter who or what it is interacting with or acting upon.
- ☑ If you jump off a cliff, you will splat on the rocks below, believer and unbeliever alike!
- ☑ Even Y’shua would not tempt His Heavenly Father to transgress the laws of nature!
- ☑ *“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him **on the pinnacle of the temple**, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, **throw Yourself down**. For it is written: ‘**He shall give His angels charge over you, and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.**’ ” Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘**You shall not tempt the Lord your God.**’ ”” Matthew 4:5-7 NKJV*

- ☑ So likewise, if you start a small fire in a dry forest, the fire will take over and nature will take its course! Everything in its path will be burned.
- ☑ **The Tongue is set on fire...**
 - ☑ Now, what fuels the tongue to be the small flame it is, (when it is acting as a destructive flame!)? It is hell itself!
- ☑ *“For **every kind of beast** and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, **is tamed and has been tamed by mankind**. But **no man can tame the tongue**. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” James 3:7-8 NKJV*
- ☑ **Taming the tongue**
 - ☑ Taming the tongue means you have full control over what precedes out of of your mouth!
- ☑ **Can man tame the tongue?**
 - ☑ On his own, without the Holy Spirit, a man has no chance to control his tongue. Only a man with the Spirit of God can direct his tongue appropriately (at all times!).
 - ☑ *“For what man knows the things of a man **except the spirit of the man** which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God **except the Spirit of God**. Now we have received, **not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God**, that we might know*

*the things that have been freely given to us by God.” I
Corinthians 2:11-12 NKJV*

☑ **Unruly evil, full of deadly poison.**

- ☑ Under the influence of the human spirit, the tongue is a wild untamable animal.
- ☑ It is fully animated by evil and only spews forth poison.

☑ *“With it **we bless** our God and Father, and with it **we curse men**, who have been **made in the similitude of God.**” James 3:9 NKJV*

☑ **We Bless God and Curse Man**

- ☑ Hypocrisy: you act one way toward God but in the natural world you are different. This is just smoke and mirrors.
- ☑ What you are on the outside is ALWAYS a reflection of your true nature on the inside.

☑ **The Image of God** (See: [The Image of God](#))

- ☑ We are created in God’s image. That means, how you treat others is EXACTLY how you are treating God!

☑ **The Power of Creation is in the Words**

- ☑ God said... **“Then God said,** “Let there be light”; and there was light.” Genesis 1:3 NKJV

- ☑ God created all things with His words!

- ☑ And you are created in the similitude of God! Therefore, inherent in your words are the power of creation.
- ☑ *“Then God said, **“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**”* Genesis 1:26-27 NKJV
- ☑ So you have a choice: Create life or death! Man shall live by THE WORD!
- ☑ *“But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not **live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**’ ””* Matthew 4:4 NKJV
- ☑ **The Power of Creation**
- ☑ If you are made in God’s image, and He spoke creation into existence, then the words you speak have the power of creation!
- ☑ **Resurrection Power: it is in you!**
- ☑ *“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

*and what is the exceeding greatness of **His power toward us who believe**, according to the working of His mighty power **which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead** and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,” Ephesians 1:18-20 NKJV*

☑ **The Power to Forgive Sins: it is in you!**

☑ *“So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.**”” John 20:21-23 NKJV*

☑ **Imparting Grace: it is in you!**

☑ *“Therefore, putting away lying, “**Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,**” for we are members of one another. “Be angry, and **do not sin**”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, **nor give place to the devil.** Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.” Ephesians 4:25-28 NKJV*

- ☑ The setup is this. When you go to loose something out of your mouth, speak truth—not iniquity! If you speak lies you are fueling your tongue with HELL!
- ☑ ***“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, **that it may impart grace** to the hearers.”*** Ephesians 4:29 NKJV
- ☑ Grace is God’s supernatural power! You have the gift, ability and responsibility to access and release God’s power to others!
- ☑ **The Power to Move Mountains: it is in you!**
- ☑ *“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever **says to this mountain**, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”*
Mark 11:23 NKJV
- ☑ [The Sins That Leads to Death...\(Understanding the Sin that Leads to Death\)](#)
- ☑ *“And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and **evil speaking** be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”* Ephesians 4:30-32 NKJV

- ☑ *“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” Matthew 12:31-32 NKJV*
- ☑ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!
- ☑ *“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:33-37 NKJV*
- ☑ The abundance of the heart
- ☑ *“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. The eyes*

of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good. **A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.**” Proverbs 15:1-4 NKJV

☑ **“The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, But the heart of the fool does not do so.”** Proverbs 15:7 NKJV

☑ **“A man’s stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; From the produce of his lips he shall be filled.”** Proverbs 18:20 NKJV

☑ **“If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, Or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth.”** Proverbs 30:32 NKJV [“If you are foolishly bragging or planning something evil, then stop it now!” Proverbs 30:32 CEV]

☑ **“Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”** James 3:10-12 NKJV

☑ **One Organ—multiple options**

- ☑ Yes, you have a choice whether to loose from your mouth, either life or death. But you cannot do both!
- ☑ **Choose! Life and Death, Good and Evil, Blessings or Cursing**
- ☑ *““See, I have set before you today **life and good, death and evil**, in that I command you today to **love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply**; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But **if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them**, I announce to you today that **you shall surely perish**; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. **I call heaven and earth as witnesses** today against you, that **I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life**, that both you and your descendants may live; that you **may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days**; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord*

swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” Deuteronomy 30:15-20 NKJV

☑ **Be careful—if the power of creation is within your lips...**

☑ *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will **eat its fruit.**” Proverbs 18:21 NKJV*

☑ **Your words WILL accomplish what they proclaim**

☑ *“So shall **My word** be that goes forth **from My mouth;** It shall not return to Me void, But **it shall accomplish what I please,** And **it shall prosper** in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11 NKJV*

☑ **Don’t speak evil—don’t speak lies!**

☑ *“For “He who would love life And see good days, **Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.**” I Peter 3:10 NKJV*

NEXT TEACHING

Above or Below (James 3:13-18)