

## James #4: Faith When You Open Your Mouth

*Speech is a wonderful gift of God. Real faith leads us to speak in a way that helps instead of harms people.*

Our words are important because they have power to harm or heal. (Jas 3:2-11)

- **James 3:2** 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.
- Words have power akin to a large animal, a ship, or even a forest fire...
- **James 3:5** 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.
- Words have the power to do harm - like a tiny spark of flame.
  - **Prov 18:21** The tongue has the power of life and death.
  - "Death" stands for all the kinds of destruction words can do.
- Words have the power to heal.
- **James 3:9** With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness... **11** Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?
  - Fire can be beneficial as well as harmful. A spring can be a source of refreshment. The tongue can be used to praise God.
  - **Prov 12:18** The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Tame the tongue by grasping your true identity in Christ. (Jas 3:8-12)

- Fully grasp your true identity in Christ.
- **James 3:12** My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.
  - James calls us "brothers & sisters": we belong to Jesus.
  - It's a question of identity: grapevines produce grapes.
- **Luke 6:44** Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. **45** A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.
  - A heart full of Christ will produce a different pattern of words.

Tame the tongue by understanding the resources you have to change.

- You have been given the Holy Spirit to guide your speech.
- So don't just stop using hurtful words. Become a fountain of healing.

life-giving words to others: affirmation, love, encouragement, etc.