

# Control Your Speech

James 3:1-12

SS Lesson for 02/23/2014

**Devotional Scripture:** Prov 18:2-13

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CONTROL PURITY OF TONGUE (JAMES 3:9-12)

*Control purity of tongue by rejecting sin*

Sin affects tongues because sin makes the tongue cause one to be unclean (Matt 15:11)

Sin affects tongues because speaking rashly causes ruin (Prov 13:3)

Sin affects tongues because it keeps one from keeping control over their tongues (James 1:26)

Sin affects tongues if we allow our sinful natures to rule (Rom 3:12-14)

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# Introduction

## Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson admonishes us that we should **Control our Speech**. The **study's aim** is to study some of the dangers James identifies with improper speech and to learn that a tiny part of our body has power far beyond its size, both for good and evil. The **study's application** is to practice not only thinking before speaking but praying about it as well.

### Key Verse: James 3:10

*10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Similar to the forked tongue of a snake, man's uncontrolled tongue both emits praise and spews out curses. "Praise," or "saying a good word" of our Lord and Father (this is the only place where the NT uses this title of God) is polluted by a "curse," or "wishing evil" on men... made in God's likeness (cf. Gen. 1:27; 9:6; Col. 1:10). That both praise and cursing should come from the same mouth is incongruous. My brothers, this should not be. Again James turned to the natural elements to illustrate his point. Anticipating a negative response, James asked, Can both fresh (lit., "sweet,") water and salt (lit., "bitter,") water flow, or "bubble up," from the same spring? Can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Of course not. Neither does salt make water sweet. The point is clear: a believer's tongue should not be an instrument of inconsistency. Small and influential, the tongue must be controlled; satanic and infectious, the tongue must be corralled; salty and inconsistent, the tongue must be cleansed.

### Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Someone may read James's discourse and respond, "Well, I admit that my speech is sometimes not as it should be. But I also teach the gospel. Is that not what God wants? I use my 'good' speech to serve him in that way." To this way of thinking, James gives a rejoinder: speech that does not consistently reflect God's grace contradicts the gospel that the Christian proclaims. This fact is seen in a devastating statement of contradiction. On the one hand, a believer praises God as a good, loving Father. But on the other hand, that believer also curses another person. And that person, like everyone else, bears the image of God (Genesis 1:27). What does the curse reveal about the heart of the person who utters it? Where is the love and forgiveness of God in such a curse? Calling for others to be punished by God (cursing them) is completely out of keeping with the identity of Christ's followers. Jesus insisted that those who receive God's forgiveness must extend forgiveness (Matthew 5:7; 6:12; 18:21-35). Doing less suggests that we treat God's mercy with contempt. Such contradictory speech-acts reveal that within the heart of the one who curses others lingers a denial of the gospel message. The contradiction in verse 10 is clear. We might call it "speaking out of both sides of the mouth." What does this person truly believe, who praises God and curses those who bear God's image? Remembering Jesus' words about taking the plank out of our own eye before attempting to help a brother with a speck of sawdust in his (Matthew 7:1-5), we realize that we must first ask what our speech reveals about our own hearts.

## Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the outline of the lesson came the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
1	My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall	Control for Teachers

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
	receive a stricter judgment.	
5	Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.	Control Tongue's Power
10	Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.	Control Purity of Tongue

## ***Lesson Introduction and Background***

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Some Native Americans believe that when a word is spoken it begins to live that day, and that no word spoken will ever die. There is a ring of truth to this. Careless, thoughtless remarks and their effects seem to live on and on, don't they? All of us have experienced the lingering pain caused by unkind words. We'd like to take back some of the words we've spoken. Though we apologize, we know that damage has already been done. Each day we have an opportunity to glorify Christ with our tongues or give victory to the devil. We don't control our tongues as well as we should—none of us do. This lesson will help all of us do better in this regard. Talk fills our lives. Family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, salespeople, teachers, politicians, and preachers knit together the fabric of life with talk. Talk has tremendous impact that often goes unnoticed. We believed in the power of words when we were little—that abracadabra could bring a rabbit out of a hat and that saying "There's no place like home" could transport a person from Oz to Kansas. But as we grew older and cast aside a "magical" view of words, we seem to forget that words still have a lot of power. Most of us utter harmful, dangerous words every day. Our desire to be right, to get ahead, to gain control, to be heard, or to defend ourselves can motivate us to say all kinds of things at the expense of others. Fortunately, with sincere words we can also apologize. However, catching ourselves before we sin with our speech is tough. Still, we can do better, as this lesson will teach. The epistle of James sits on the shoulders of a large body of literature that both collects and develops wise sayings to help people succeed. Bible readers will be most familiar with this type of literature, called wisdom literature, from reading Proverbs or Ecclesiastes. This style of literature was very popular in the ancient world. Speech habits are one of the most predominant themes of these collections of wisdom. Proverbs 18:21 says, "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Jesus said, "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36, 37). Such is the importance of this issue! After offering a brief warning to be "slow to speak" in James 1:19 and then reinforcing this with the advice in 1:26, James unleashes in chapter 3 his entire arsenal of reasons why the tongue must be controlled. Though it begins as a mandate to teachers in the church, it applies to everyone.

## **Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### ***Control for Teachers (James 3:1)***

1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

#### **Consider the decision of being a teacher**

*Because there is only one true Teacher and that is Jesus (Matt 23:8)*

8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

*Because as a teacher we should speak what we know and have seen from God (John 3:10-12)*

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

*Because to be a teacher, one must have first been taught himself (Rom 2:17-21)*

Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?

*Because God appoints true teachers (1 Cor 12:28)*

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

### **Consider the accountability of being a teacher**

*Accountability to warn and tell others about God's requirements (Ezek 3:18-19)*

18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

*Accountability of doing God's will when we know it (Luke 12:47-48)*

47 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

*Accountability of faithfulness (1 Cor 4:2)*

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

*Accountability of having to give account of those we teach (Heb 13:17)*

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

### **Consider the judgment of being a teacher**

*Judgment of pride (Luke 20:45-47)*

46 "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 47 who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

*Judgment of not understanding what we say or teach (1 Tim 1:5-7)*

5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

*Judgment of not teaching sound doctrine (2 Tim 4:3-4)*

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

*Judgment of not maturing in the Word (Heb 5:12)*

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

*Judgment of being a false teacher (2 Peter 2:1)*

1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

*Judgment of being a stumbling block (Matt 23:15)*

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

### **Control Tongue's Power (James 3:2-8)**

2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

6 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.

7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

### **Don't let the tongue make us stumble**

*Stumble into condemnation (Matt 12:37)*

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

*It is better to lose our tongue than to let it make us stumble (Matt 5:29)*

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

*Stumble by living according to the flesh (Rom 8:13)*

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

*Stumble by not disciplining our body and bringing it into subjection to God (1 Cor 9:27)*

27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

## **Power of the tongue**

### *Power to be like a sword (Prov 12:18-19)*

18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health. 19 The truthful lip shall be established forever, But a lying tongue is but for a moment.

### *Power of life and death (Prov 18:21)*

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

### *Power to take advantage (Jude 16)*

16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

### *Power to defile oneself (Matt 15:11)*

11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

### *Power of poison and deceit (Rom 3:13)*

13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";

## **Taming the tongue**

### *Tame by keeping our tongues from evil (Ps 34:13)*

13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.

### *Tame by guarding our tongues and ways (Ps 39:1)*

1 I said, "I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me."

### *Tame by ensuring our tongues are guided by God (Prov 16:1)*

1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

### *Tame by guarding our mouth (Prov 21:23)*

23 Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles.

### *Tame by bridling our tongues (James 1:26)*

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

## **Control Purity of Tongue (James 3:9-12)**

9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

## **Control purity of tongue by rejecting sin**

*Sin affects tongues because sin makes the tongue cause one to be unclean (Matt 15:11)*

11 What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"

*Sin affects tongues because speaking rashly causes ruin (Prov 13:3)*

3 He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.

*Sin affects tongues because it keeps one from keeping control over their tongues (James 1:26)*

26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

*Sin affects tongues if we allow our sinful natures to rule (Rom 3:12-14)*

12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." 13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

## **Control purity of tongue by committing to guard speech**

*Commit to seek God to guarding our lips (Ps 141:3)*

3 Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.

*Commit to guarding our mouths (Prov 21:23)*

23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.

*Commit to muzzling our speech (Ps 39:1)*

1 I said, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence."

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Concluding Thought From Bob Deffinbaugh**

*From the series: The Tests of True Religion: A Study of the Book of James*

According to James, every one of us should be reluctant to speak, rather than to compulsively strive to speak. There are some folks who should not speak at all. These are the folks who do not have the message of the gospel right, or they are motivated by selfish desires. But for all the rest of us – men and women – we need to learn when to be quiet and to listen to what others have to say. We may wish to rebuke or to complain when we should put up with our situation silently (see 1 Peter 2:18-3:2). We may wish to give advice when the wise thing to do is to keep silent. While there are many times when it would be wrong to remain silent, there seem to be at least as many times when it would be wrong to speak. Silence really can be golden.

Once again, James has returned to the relationship between our words and our works. The “wann-a-be teachers” seem to be convinced that wisdom is a matter of words alone. James does not deny that wisdom is spoken in words, but he also wishes us to understand that wisdom is demonstrated in works. James tells us that the mouth is capable of incredible duplicity; it is capable of speaking words of blessing and words of cursing. We cannot know true wisdom by words alone. The person who is truly wise is the one who lives life skillfully

(this is what Proverbs is about), so that we know to whom we should listen. Reading in James reminded me of these words of Paul:

31 Therefore be alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears. 32 And now I entrust you to God and to the message of his grace. This message is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 **I have desired no one's silver or gold or clothing.** 34 **You yourselves know that these hands of mine provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me.** 35 **By all these things, I have shown you that by working in this way we must help the weak,** and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:31-35, emphasis mine).

16 Nevertheless, let us live up to the standard that we have already attained. 17 **Be imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and watch carefully those who are living this way, just as you have us as an example.** 18 For many live (about whom I often told you, and now say even with tears) as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, they exult in their shame, and they think about earthly things (Philippians 3:16-19, emphasis mine).

And what you learned and received and heard **and saw in me,** do these things. And the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:9, emphasis mine).

4 We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 in that **our gospel did not come to you merely in speech,** but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you). 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received the message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, despite great affliction. 7 As a result you became examples to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1:4-7, emphasis mine).

6 But we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from any brother who lives an undisciplined life and not according to the tradition you received from us. 7 For you know yourselves how **you must imitate us, because we did not behave without discipline among you, 8 and we did not eat anyone's food without paying. Instead, in toil and drudgery we worked night and day in order not to burden any of you.** 9 **It was not because we do not have that right, but to give ourselves as an example for you to imitate.** 10 For even when we were with you we used to give you this command: "If anyone is not willing to work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, emphasis mine).

In his speaking and writing, Paul could appeal to his audience to consider his lifestyle in order to see how he practiced what he preached. Paul's authority and credibility came, in part, from the way he lived out his life. His words and his works were consistent. What Paul preached, Paul practiced. Note, too, that when Paul lays down the qualifications for an elder, he calls for qualities in the candidate's life which are observable, and which demonstrate true wisdom:

1 This saying is trustworthy: "If someone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work." 2 The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, 3 not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money. 4 He must manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity. 5 But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the church of God? (1 Timothy 3:1-5).

Likewise, those who are false teachers will be known by their fruits:

15 "Watch out for false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are voracious wolves. 16 **You will recognize them by their fruit.** Grapes are not gathered from thorns or figs from thistles, are they? 17 In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree to bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 7:20 So then, you will recognize them by their fruit" (Matthew 7:15-20, emphasis mine).

8 And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these people—who have warped minds and are disqualified in the faith—also oppose the truth. 9 **But they will not go much further, for their foolishness will be obvious to everyone,** just like it was with Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8-9, emphasis mine).

1 But false prophets arose among the people, just as there will be **false teachers** among you. These false teachers will infiltrate your midst with destructive heresies, even to the point of denying the Master who bought them. As a result, they will bring swift destruction on themselves. 2 And many will **follow their debauched lifestyles**. Because of these **false teachers**, the way of truth will be slandered. 3 And in their greed they will exploit you with **deceptive words**. **Their condemnation pronounced long ago is not sitting idly by**; their destruction is not asleep (2 Peter 2:1-3, emphasis mine).

Whether it be wisdom or folly, you can be certain that either will be evident in the works of a man. True wisdom is practical and practiced by those who would teach it.

It has been observed that the words of James are more like the words of Jesus than any other New Testament author. We can certainly see the similarity of James 3:8-12 with these words of our Lord:

43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from brambles. 45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for his mouth speaks from what fills his heart” (Luke 6:43-45).

The *heart* is the key to controlling the tongue. James is not calling for more will-power and determination to control our tongues. If the tongue is set ablaze by hell, then only heaven can help us. And God has provided us with this help. He has given those who have placed their trust in Him a new heart. We are to be keepers of the heart, so that the thoughts of our heart are on Him who died for us. As our hearts are filled with Him, with His Word, with His salvation and grace, then our lips will reveal the overflow of our hearts.

More than any act of guarding, guard your heart, for from it are the sources of life (Proverbs 4:23).

The fruit of our lips, then, reveals the condition of our hearts. In the Book of Romans, Paul turns to a number of Old Testament texts to show that we are all sinners, deserving of God’s eternal wrath. A number of these focus on the tongue (Romans 3:9-14).

Does your tongue betray the fact that you are a sinner, deserving of God’s eternal wrath? Then God has given us the solution in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your acceptance of Christ’s provision for your salvation involves your heart and your tongue:

10:8 But what does it say? “***The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart***” (that is, the word of faith that we preach), 10:9 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10:10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 10:11 For the scripture says, “***Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.***” 10:12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. 10:13 For ***everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*** (Romans 10:8-13).

If you have never acknowledged your sin, I urge you to do so this very day. If you desire the freedom of God’s forgiveness and the assurance of eternal life, then I would urge you to do as Paul has indicated above – believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead. Trust in Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is through Him alone that we can be saved.

From URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/taming-tongue-james-31-18>

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

A mother cradles her infant while she pours out angry words at her because she will not stop crying. A dad talks to his son about the value of sportsmanship, but then blasts the youngster for admitting an error to the umpire and thereby losing the game. What’s wrong with these pictures? Indeed, it is easy to send inconsistent signals in our communications. People who genuinely seek to improve their skills in this area will try to remove such inconsistencies. But the Christian has a higher calling still: we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and we are to be like him (Leviticus 11:44 [quoted in 1 Peter 1:15, 16]; Matthew 5:48). How

sinful, therefore, to take delight in using our words and our communications inappropriately! Our speech can be an obvious indication of our authenticity as Christians. We soothe a crying baby. We encourage our children to play fair. And when we do, we model the right picture.

The situation of James's audience was not all that much different from ours. We need to confront the reality of our speech so that we can learn to control it. Those who have experienced God's grace should have speech that reflects God's grace. After studying James's warning that teachers of God's Word "will be judged more strictly," we may want to say, "I certainly do not want to be a teacher! The standard is too high. I can never restrain my speech like this. Just let me be an ordinary Christian who listens to others teach!" But as James lays bare the realities of our speech and its consequences, we should realize that we are all teachers because of the fact that we bear the name of Christ. Others watch us to see what a Christ-follower does and says. They scrutinize our actions, and they listen to our words. They learn our beliefs more by hearing us speak about ordinary, day-to-day matters than by hearing us speak about Bible doctrine. When we speak unlovingly with bitterness, vindictiveness, or scorn, we demonstrate a very wrong kind of belief about God—that he too is unloving, vengeful, and unforgiving. If we speak in this way, we invite on ourselves "the stricter judgment" that is due those who teach, because indeed we are teaching something with everything we say. God's grace is powerful enough to overcome our wayward tongues. As we focus on what God has given us in Christ, the reality of our hearts will flow through our words.

### ***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator***

1. Our words show our true character (James 3:1-2)
2. Small things can often be used to exert control over people in unimaginable ways (vss. 3-4)
3. The tongue, although small, has incredible power to defile a person's body, his reputation, and his future (vss. 5-6)
4. The damage done by idle words can be long-lasting and far-reaching (vss. 7-8)
5. A person's tongue can do either good or evil; put yours to work for God (vss. 9-10)
6. Resolve that in the Holy Spirit's power, you will speak words that build people up, not tear them down (vss. 11-12)