



Perfecting Faith: The Book of James

## Faith and My Tongue

Death and Life are in the Tongue

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

*Proverbs 18:21*

“...the tongue of the wise is health.”

*Proverbs 12:18*

**James has a lot to say about the tongue!**

James 1:26; 4:1; 4:11; 4:16

Just as a doctor examines a patient’s tongue to assist in a diagnosis, so James tests a person’s spiritual health by his or her tongue (*conversation—the words that come from my heart and mouth!*)

### A. The Tongue’s **Potential** James 3:1-2

1. Accountability and responsibility :1
2. Maturity :2; *Mat 12:34b-37*

### B. The Tongue’s **Power** James 3:3-6

*It can take control of my whole life...*

1. Like a horse—obedience :3
2. Like a ship—driven through the wind :4  
*What are these winds? (See other side)*
3. Like a fire—can destroy :5-6

### C. The Tongue’s **Problem** James 3:7-8

1. I can’t tame my tongue.
2. You can’t tame my tongue.
3. Only God can tame my tongue!  
Because of the fall, we have lost dominion over this small piece of flesh. Human nature or strength cannot tame the tongue.

### D. The Tongue’s **Purpose** James 3:9-12

1. The primary purpose of the tongue is to bless God—to offer pure words from a clean heart. :9
2. Like a stream or fig tree—the tongue should reflect the source (the heart). :11-12

#### **How do I do that?**

- a. Trust in Jesus to change your heart from evil to righteous. *Mat 12:34; Rom 10:8-11*
- b. Protect your heart by evaluating what is feeding or controlling your heart! *Prov 4:23*
- c. Nourish your heart from God’s Word *Psalms 1:1-3*

*“...be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”*

## Is What You Say Who You Are?

**James 3:1-12**

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

**: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.

**: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.

# What “Strong Winds” are Pushing Your Need for Control?

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James teaches us that the tongue is like a rudder, guiding a ship in “strong winds.” Evaluate these potential “strong winds” of life below and honestly assess how well you control your tongue and life in these areas.

## Wind of anger, critical spirit:

- *Proverbs 15:1-4* A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- *Proverbs 12:18* There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise *promotes* health.
- *Proverbs 14:29* *He who is slow to wrath* has great understanding, but *he who is impulsive exalts folly*
- *Ephesians 4:29* Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

## Wind of impulsive word:

- *Proverbs 10:19* In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.
- *Proverbs 15:28* The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.
- *Psalms 19:14* Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.
- *Proverbs 17:27-28* He who has knowledge spares his words, *and* a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; *When he shuts his lips, he is considered* perceptive.
- *Proverbs 21:23* Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

## Wind of lies, deceit:

- *Proverbs 26:18-28* :18 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, :19 Is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, "I was only joking!" :20 Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. :21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. :22 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. :23 Fervent lips with a wicked heart Are like earthenware covered with silver dross. :24 He who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself; :25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart; :26 Though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly. :27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him. :28 A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin.
- *Proverbs 15:4* A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

## Wind of gossip:

- *Proverbs 20:19* He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.
- *Proverbs 11:13* A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.
- *II Corinthians 12:20* For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults...