

CONTROLLING YOUR TONGUE

(James 3:1-6)

I. SPEECH AND DIVINE WISDOM (3:1-12)

A. James Uses Several Examples of the Uncontrollable Nature of the Tongue (3:1-6)

1. Apparently there were those Christians in the assembly who aspired to _____, maybe because of the _____ and _____ a teacher might receive. (v. 1a)

2. James reminded them of the tremendous responsibility and _____ that a teacher has in receiving the stricter _____ from people and God. (v. 1b)

3. James included himself when he wrote, “_____ *stumble in many things*”; nothing seems to trip a believer up more than a dangling _____. (v. 2a)

4. Only the _____ (*teleios*) Christian who is under the control of the Holy Spirit is able to “*bridle the whole body*”; _____ often lead to _____. (v. 2b, cf. Prov. 10:19; 12:18; 17:27; Gal. 5:22-23)

5. In building his case against the damaging power of one’s words, James utilizes three illustrations to get his point across in verses 3 through 6..
 - a. If a wild stallion can eventually be tamed and _____ with a _____ in his mouth, the same could be said of the human condition and the tongue. (v. 3, cf. Ps. 39:1)

b. Even though the rudder on a ship is very small by comparison, yet it can _____ the entire _____ of the ship. (v. 4, cf. Prov. 25:23)

1) Much like the bit fights the wild nature of the horse and the rudder fights the winds and current, you have the _____, the _____, and the _____ that want to control you and your speech. (Eph. 2:1-3)

2) Both the bit/bridle and the rudder need a _____ in controlling them; likewise, as a Christian you need the Holy Spirit to _____ your tongue. (Ps. 12:3-4; 141:3-4; Matt. 12:34-35; Col. 4:6)

c. When fire is under control, it keeps our bodies warm, and it cooks our food; but when it is _____ of control, it is _____. (v. 5, cf. Prov. 15:1-2; 26:20-21)

6. Despite its proportion in size, the tongue can cause _____ within the church, harsh words can _____ a marriage, its rumors can set _____ and ruin reputations. (v. 6a)

7. All of the evil characteristics of a fallen world, blasphemy, lewdness, hatred, contentions (etc.), find expression through the _____ and _____ tongue. (v. 6b, cf. Matt. 15:18-20; Gal. 5:19-21)

* How can you personally apply this truth today in your own life?