



## ***What Our Words Say About Us***

James 3:1-12

Pastor John Sloan

Introduction: A strong 2,000-pound stallion is easily led by a tiny device weighing only a few ounces. A high-powered ocean vessel glides upon the water, cutting back and forth through the waves, and is controlled by a small rudder only a fraction of the ship's size. Diminutive instruments but wielding much power. So, James says, is the tongue. In fact, he argues, if we could gain control of our tongues, we could actually reach perfection. But no one can tame the tongue. What then should we do?

**01.**

**02.**

**03.**

# WHAT WORKS ARE WORTH

[A Study through the Letter of James]

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & DISCOVERY

1. Why is the role of teacher one that should only be considered after much prayer and counsel?
2. Why does James use such inflammatory language to describe the tongue's effects (vv. 5-6)?
3. The tongue is only the presenting issue; what's the problem behind the tongue?
4. Think about a time when you hurt someone with your words. What was the motivation behind what you said?
5. What are some practical ways that you can be more careful with your words?
6. In what sense does the way we speak give evidence of whether or not we grasp the gospel?

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1. **01. Our words carry unparalleled potential to destroy.**
2. "The tongue daily demonstrates both our sinfulness and our inability to reform ourselves."  
- *Daniel Doriani*
3. "Woe is me!... I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."
4. "None is righteous, no, not one; All have turned aside; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." - *Romans 3:10-14*
5. **02. The heart moves the tongue; our mouths simply reveal what our hearts truly feel.**
6. "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." - *Luke 6:45*
7. "I had not noticed how the humblest, and at the same time most balanced and capacious minds, praised most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praised the least." - *C.S. Lewis*
8. "[The text] does not say 'no one can tame the tongue,' but 'no man', so that, when it is tamed, we admit that it was done by the mercy of God, the assistance of God, the grace of God." - *St. Augustine*
9. "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." - *James 1:26 ESV*
10. **03. The first and quintessential step in taming the tongue is recognizing our complete inability to do so.**
11. "But on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. For [God] said to me, 'My power is made perfect in weakness.' For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me...For when I am weak then I am strong." - *2 Corinthians 12*

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