

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

**Study Series: Wisdom for Living – Study of Epistle of James
Part 7: Taming the Tongue - James 3:1–18**

**Wednesday, March 13th, 2024
Facilitator: Min. Nneoma Ewurum**

Breakdown of the Study of the Book of James		
Date	Passage	Topic
1/31/2024	James	Part 1: Overview of Epistle of James
2/7/2024	James 1:2–11	Part 2: Growing Through Trials
2/14/2024	James 1:12–18	Part 3: The Process of Temptation
2/21/2024	James 1:19–25	Part 4: Hearing and Doing the Word
2/28/2024	James 2:1–13	Part 5: The Sin of Partiality
3/6/2024	James 2:14–26	Part 6: Faith Without Works Is Dead
3/13/2024	James 3:1–18	Part 7: Taming the Tongue
3/20/2024	James 4:1– 12	Part 8: The Cause of Quarrels
3/27/2024	James 4:13– 5:6	Part 9: Sins of the Wealthy
4/3/2024	James 5:7– 12	Part 10: Patience in Suffering
4/10/2024	James 5:13– 20	Part 11: The Prayer of Faith
4/17/2024	James	Part 12: Summary and Conclusion

The Power of our Words

Words are incredibly powerful. They can build up, encourage, and motivate. Words can also tear down, hurt, and cause horrible scars. Remember the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." It isn't true. Words can hurt. Some of us are living with the scars of the hurtful words of others. Our words can have unintended consequences: weakening our marriage relationship, creating division between friends and distrust among colleagues, and alienating our children. They can cost us our jobs, our reputations, and untold opportunities. What comes out of our mouth can cause us to experience a lifetime of regret, especially if they knock us off the course God has for our lives. Our words can also bless, encourage, edify, and strengthen others. In Christ, our words even have a creative and transformative power! The ability to call things that are not into existence. The Bible reminds us that "Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." Proverbs 18:21.

What are some other powerful things can our words can do?

Our words also matter to God. He keeps a record of our words. Jesus said, "I tell you that on the Day of Judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak." Matt 12:36. We say some words carelessly, without concern for their impact on others. A mature Christian is known not only by how they walk but by how they talk. It's important how you live, but what you say is just as important.

Was there ever a time when you wished you could take back your words? in what situations do you find your speech most out of character with who you really are?

Taming the tongue

Definition of taming is to make less powerful and easier to control, to bring under control, to control something dangerous and powerful, to keep from exceeding a desirable degree or level.

Taming the tongue means putting a guard over your mouth and ensuring that what comes out is in line with God's Word and His own heart and the good fruits of the Holy Spirit.

No man can tame the tongue; but God can, if we allow Him to. The way to tame your tongue is by partnering with the Holy Spirit; these problems cannot be solved or transformed by mere willpower.

How do you speak?

- Don't speak too much.
- Don't speak too soon.
- Don't speak without first listening.

Speaking too soon combined with not listening leads to conflict — and conflict often leads to anger. But when we choose to live out the words of this verse, the promise of Scripture is that we can defuse angry encounters before they even spark.

Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut. — Proverbs 10:19 (NLT).

There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking. — Proverbs 29:20 (NLT).

Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish. — Proverbs 18:13 (NLT).

Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent. — Proverbs 17:28 (NLT).

Perfect the art of the pause. Pausing creates white space in a conversation that enables us to sort out our thoughts before we let out our words. Counting to ten before responding provides just enough wiggle room to really think through what we are about to say, sometimes realizing in that short pause the ridiculousness of the words we were about to let out of the trapdoor of our soul.

Giving our thoughts time to settle and soak in Scripture is a wonderful habit that will keep us from answering too soon and looking foolish.

Relationship between the tongue and the heart

Transforming the tongue begins with a change in the heart. The tongue is a reflection of the heart. Words reveal what is in our hearts.

³³ *"A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. ³⁴ You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. ³⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. - Matthew 12:33-35 (NLT)*

Jesus said, "But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man." Matt 15:18. The heart influences the tongue. When it is full of anger, selfishness, envy, pride, and all the other negative things that can invade our hearts, we are affected in everything we do. Garbage in, garbage out.

Practical ways to tame the tongue

1. Start by honestly assessing your habits regarding your tongue and speech. Enlist the help of someone spiritually mature who is close to you if needed
2. Take notes of where you slip up and why. Recognize triggers if any
3. Practice speaking slowly and listening more. Practice the ten second pause
4. Intentionally surrender to the help of the Holy Spirit in regards to your speech
5. Pray the words of David in Psalm 141: 3, *"Take control of what I say, O Lord, and guard my lips."* And Psalm 19:14, *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."*
6. Guard your heart. What you allow access to through what you listen to and what you watch. Philippians 4:8.
7. Speak life! Proverbs 10:11a. *"The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life"*. Ephesians 4:29. *"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them"*