

1. Our Tongues are Powerful

Question -- anyone steered a boat -- what steers it?
OHP boat with rudder

Question -- anyone ridden a horse -- how do you control a horse? (Pull on the ears!) >>> the bit -- OHP of horses bit.

Both are small things -- but control big things.
So our tongues are small but very powerful -- big effects

2. Our tongues show what is in our Hearts.

OHP -- of water pump.
If the water in the well is bad then the water you pump out will taste bad.

So what comes out of your mouth tells what you are like deep down inside.

If nasty things come out...

3. Our tongues are Dangerous

-- like a fire -- cause much destruction.
Our tongues can destroy friendships and relationships.
Remember once the words have left your mouth... It's like putting toothpaste back in the tube - not possible !

4. Our tongues need to be controlled.

But this is difficult -- they are like wild animals.

We can use our tongues destructively to manipulate others, to get what we want, to insult, to blackmail, to say untrue things, to gain power and control.

Or - We can ask ourselves these 5 questions before way speak. **T H I N K**

OHP

Is it **True**?

Is it **Helpful**? Will your words help bring about a solution to a problem?

Is it **Inspiring**? Will your words build up someone?

Is it **Necessary**? Do we have to say anything at all?

Is it **Kind**? Are your words based on a desire to help?

Conclusion

Resolve to say only good things to everyone you meet today.

James 3:1-12 - The Tongue

A man joined a Trapist monastery. For three years he was given a probation period where he was not to speak at all, - but at the end of each year he could say two words. At the end of the first year he said, "Bed hard."

At end of the second year he said, "Food cold."

At the end of the third year he's about had it. He comes in and says, "I quit".

The head priest says, "That doesn't surprise me. All you've done is complain since you got here."

But we are not Trappist monks

- we use thousands of words and phrases each day
- sooo powerful.

· Words shape and define our lives

· Words reveal the faith we have in our life

The sins of the tongue can be the hardest sins to control. A mature person someone who is able to hold the most uncontrollable part of his human anatomy in check. So better self control in other aspects.

The tongue remains hidden for the most part, but when it does make its presence known it has devastating power. **With the tongue we can express or repress; release or restrain; enlighten or obscure; adore or abhor; offend or befriend; affirm or alienate; build or belittle; comfort or criticize; delight or destroy; be sincere or sinister.**

Example (Pause)

· I love you, you're important to me, thank you so much, how can I repay you, you look really nice today, I like your new haircut, great job, this place wouldn't be the same without you, I'm proud of you, you are irreplaceable, will you marry me, were having a baby

· I hate you, you disgust me, I wish you had never been born, I wish I were dead, you make me sick, I want a divorce, nobody cares about you, I'll never speak to you again
(Pause)

In verses 3-12, James uses 6 different word pictures of the tongue to help us see how although small, yet powerful it is: (groups of two)

A horse's bit and A rudder

A fire and A dangerous animal

A spring and a Fruit

1. A horse's bit and A rudder

OUR WORDS CAN DIRECT US AND OTHERS IN LIFE

- Bit, This relatively small piece of metal can control a very powerful animal -

- Rudder. a small rudder controls the direction of a large liner

So the tongue can be used to - advise - direct - Control

2. A fire ; A dangerous animal

OUR WORDS CAN DESTROY US AND OTHERS:

· Our words can be devastating to others:

· And of course - once the words have gone forth from your mouth, it is too late.

Feathers story - "They are like the feathers scattered in the wind. You can not retrieve them. "

3. Third group - A Spring (of water) ; Fruit. (Verses 12ff)

OUR WORDS DISPLAY WHO WE ARE AND WHAT'S IN OUR HEARTS

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Action Steps

1. Think First.

"Are your words flames or flowers?"

We have a choice to make we can plant beautiful flowers with our words or we can unleash a raging fire.

Using the acronym THINK, try to ask these 5 questions before you speak.

Is it True? Remember this rule about gossip: "The more interesting it is, the more likely it is to be false."

Is it Helpful? Will your words help bring about a solution to a problem?

Is it Inspiring? Will your words build up someone?

Is it Necessary? Do we have to say anything at all?

Is it Kind? Are your words based on a desire to help?

Sum - think first

2. Second - Talk Less. Your chances of blowing it with your words are directly proportional to the amount of time you spend with your mouth open. Abe Lincoln said, "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

Another US president Calvin Coolidge (1929 recession) said, "I have never been hurt by anything I did not say." Very taciturn person. Renowned for saying very little. (rare for politician)
competition - woman at a social - Mr President I have placed a bet that I can get you to say more than two words. Coolidge replied "You Lose"

3. Third - Build up others. The Bible continuously reminds us to encourage one another with our words. Are we speaking words of death or words of life? Words of life energize people. Proverbs 12:25 says, "An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up."

Challenge - try to give one encouraging word to everyone you talk to every day. You'll probably have to be deliberate. Tell your son or daughter something that will build them up. Teenagers, give a life-word to your parents. Siblings, say something kind to each other. Couples, affirm and encourage each other at least once a day.