

# LIVING FAITH – The Book of JAMES Part 4

## Taming the Tongue

### **JAMES' CAMPAIGN:** Challenging IMMATURITY

MSG: Control your TONGUE and you can control EVERYTHING ELSE.  
A DISCIPLINED tongue is a sign of great MATURITY.

Why is a disciplined tongue a sign of maturity. What is an untamed tongue a sign of immaturity. Which are you?!

### **THREE ILLUSTRATIONS (v3-6)**

- a) A little BIT controls a powerful HORSE.
- b) A RUDDER can turn an enormous SHIP.
- c) A tiny SPARK starts a huge forest FIRE.

Which of these three illustrations resonates most with your experience of words, and why?

### **PROVERBS on the Power of Words**

- \* Prov 12:18, 10:19, 16:27, 18:21 & 2 Tim 2:16-17.
- \* Words contain POWER: They CARRY something (John 6:63, Ps 33:6).
- \* Words have CONSEQUENCES: They PRODUCE something (Prov 12:18, 16:27, 11:29).
- \* The big danger is the UNTAMED tongue (James 3:7-12).

How have you seen words produce lasting consequences (for good or harm) in your life or the lives of others?

How can your words be containers of either faith, fear, love or strife? Can you identify patterns in your own speech?

How does thinking about the permanence of words (they don't just disappear) change the way you speak?

### **JESUS' TEACHING (Matt 12:33-37)**

<sup>34</sup>For out of the ABUNDANCE of the HEART the MOUTH SPEAKS.

- \* What's INSIDE you will inevitably COME OUT.
- \* Your WORDS are incontrovertible EVIDENCE of what's in your HEART.
- \* What FILLS you WILL come out, eventually, inevitably.

If your words are 'incontrovertible evidence' of what's in your heart, what do the words you consistently speak say about any areas of your heart that need the touch of God?

### **The MESSAGE**

- \* DIVIDED speech comes from a DIVIDED heart.
- \* Inconsistencies come because there are two STRONG, OPPOSING INFLUENCES on that heart: FLESH & SPIRIT.
- \* Flesh must be DENIED, STARVED, SUPPRESSED.
- \* Spirit must be NURTURED, EMPOWERED, PRIORITISED.
- \* And this is the MATURING JOURNEY we're all on, as Christians.

How do the 'two strong opposing influences' of flesh and Spirit show up in your words? Can you identify specific examples?  
What practical steps can you take to deny the flesh and nurture the Spirit in order to bring your speech into alignment?

**SOLUTION:** Get so FULL of GOD that He has to COME OUT.

### **3 ACTION STEPS**

1. SURRENDER your heart (Job 22:21-22, James 4:7)
  - \* So much of the INNER TURMOIL is the result of what we have not yet SURRENDERED.
  - \* Best way to CONTROL your tongue is to CONSECRATE your heart.
  - \* Surrender is not a one-time EVENT, but a DAILY yielding:
    - a) CONFESSION, b) REPENTANCE, c) CONSECRATION.

Why is surrendering the first step? Do you agree that 'inner turmoil is the result of what you have not yet surrendered?'

Which of the three daily practices of surrender – confession, repentance, consecration – do you find easiest, and which is most challenging? Why?

2. FILL your heart (Col 3:15-16, Eph 3:19, Matt 12:34)
  - \* The Law of Displacement: If you want to CHANGE what's on the inside, you have to start POURING IN something ELSE.
  - \* What you CONSUME CONSISTENTLY will eventually CONTROL you.

What are you currently filling your heart with, and how is that shaping your speech? What Scriptures, worship or godly input could you intentionally consume to fill your heart with life-giving content?

3. GUARD your heart (Prov 4:23, Ps 141:3, Phil 4:8-9)
  - \* Filling the heart is not enough if gates are left UNPROTECTED.
  - \* Put a strong WORD FILTER on your heart & soul.

What external influences (media, conversations, habits?) do we need to be wary of & why? How do you put that 'filter' in place?