The Destructive Nature of the Tongue

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[0:00] Well, fellas, I think we're ready. Alright, for those listening outside of this room, this is a men's James study on 13 June.

We're going to be in James chapter 3, 1 through 12. And we're testing the audio, so sorry if this sounds weird. Alright, fellas, so we haven't been doing this in a while.
We've been out for quite a while, and we are back in James. Do we need to do a quick one-over-the-world flyby of James, where we're at? Or are we good to get rolling?
You guys remember where we're at, kind of what's going on, who James is? Silence is approval, so we'll chuck on.
I'll bring in some of the other themes from James as we continue, just so if we need to kind of remember where we're at and what he's talking about, we will. Alright, let's pray real quick, and then we'll continue on.
[1:04] Dear Lord, thank you for this day. Thank you for this group of men that took time out of their day and their busy schedules, and frankly, just the possibility of being out in your creation, enjoying this beautiful day. Thank you that they took time to come here, and for all of us to get together to learn to be more Christ-like, learn to control our minds and our bodies and our actions and thoughts and words and everything.

We pray, God, that you just bless these men as we study and learn your word and grow in this. Lord, pray our ears will be open to what you have to say to us, and these words wouldn't be mine, but yours.
We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Alright, I'm going to start just simply by reading James 3, 1-12. And I didn't bring readers, so if I get halfway through this...
Actually, we've got young guys here. Noah, why don't you read James 3, 1-12. Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment, for we will all stumble in many ways.
If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, and will to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horse's mouth so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.
[2:14] Look at the ships also. Though they are so great, driven by strong winds, and are still directed by a very small rudder, whenever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, yet it hosts a great thing.

See how great force is set a plan by such a small fire, and the tongue is a fire, the very word of iniquity. The tongue is also among our members, as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.
For every species of beast and bird, and for a thousand creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. Sorry. But there is not one that can tame the tongue.
It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God. For the same mouth came both blessing and cursing.
My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives and violins, produce figs?
[3:17] No. Can salt water produce fresh? Thank you. Well, I mean, it's kind of straightforward. We could stop there, make this a five-minute teaching, but we're not gonna.

All right, starting out, so my bottom line up front today, which unlike last couple sermons I did, is actually going to be at the front. So, what comes out of our mouth can direct the outlook of our lives

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and those around us for good or for evil, and we should not take this lightly.
The sin of our hearts comes out of our mouths. One moment, and in another, we sing praises to the Lord. We must exercise discipline and control our mouths to serve the Lord.
So James moves into this next section. By section, I mean chapter three. So he moves into chapter three. I don't know if you guys remember. Boy, it's been two months, three months.
We remember we came off that section on faith and works. And kind of some controversy in that in the world and, you know, in certain religions and stuff like that. So it's kind of what I feel kind of a weighty chapter, a very weighty section in the Bible that can prove or disprove your religious walk, if you will.
[4:31] And he kind of stems, he goes off of that and jumps right into, you know, my title says, the tongue is a fire, or, you know, poor speech. So he goes right off of that, right into poor speech.

So it seems a little discongruent, but we'll talk about that. So does anyone have this mastered? No. Thank you. It's a trap. Yeah, that was a 100% trap because we know in verse two, like Nolan just read, we don't. Nobody has it mastered. Nobody has it figured out. And ultimately, nobody will have it figured out perfectly.
The simple answer in verse two is, if you can control your tongue, you're perfect. Romans 3.23 says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
So you're not a sinner and you're perfect if you can control your tongue. So kind of a simple answer, which means we all need to focus on this.
[5:31] And it's something that everybody, at every walk and their sanctification needs to be working on this. Everyone must. It's just that simple. Ultimately, because this is the product of our hearts.

So this, people hear it. Immediately, it immediately affects everything as we're going to see in what James, some of his examples he gives. So examples of this in life.
What do you guys think? I got a few that I put on here, but I'll see if you see if, see if I agree. What are examples of not controlling our tongue? Oh, good one.
I didn't have that on here. Good. Yep. I think, I think that falls right in line. Angry speech. I didn't hear what you said.
Gossip. Gossip. Yep. And speaking before you. Or judgment. Yeah. Or, judgments. Judgments. Yeah, judgment with your words. And I think that plays into the first verse where he says, let not many of you become teachers.
[6:44] Michael, yours was good. Say yours again. speaking. I can't remember. I'm bored. Speaking before. Yeah. So, if you're speaking before you apply some like spiritual thought to that, the world loves this phrase.

What does the world tell you? Speak from your, speak from your heart. I'll skip ahead, but what does Jeremiah 17, 9 tell us? Does anyone have this one memorized?
The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick. Who can understand it? Perfect, Michael. Yeah, I love that. I need to come in and change this. Yeah, so if you're speaking from your heart, you've already lost.
The battle's over, fellas. I think idle talk as well, right? You've got, all these different ways that we misuse our tongue. I think just idle talk, profanity, exclamations, not necessarily anger, but just, you've just got to do this bad habit of just, offensive speech.
Offensive speech. Lazy speech. Yeah, I'm thinking more. blah. Yeah, just, what are you saying? What are you doing? Not being deliberate. I think it all ties together.
[7:57] Not being deliberate with the words that we choose to use. Yeah. So just speaking without thinking instead of, how do I need to respond to that in the right manner? Yeah.

How do I need to respond to this person? Sometimes it might be not responding, which oftentimes is just as hard as finding the right thing to say. Because I think gossip has an intent, right? You're speaking with intent to cause trouble, right?
Or you're angry, you're bursting out. But there's a sort of what I think of idle talk. Yeah. It depends on, like you said, or just nonsense talk. I know in my walk that there have been times where I've been very intentional about making sure I think before speaking.
And then there's been times I won't, but also times where God has shown me in my walk through His Word, the more I get to know Him, the more I don't want to say anything that His Son, you know, what He said, you know, in His situation.

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And none of us will ever be perfect about that. But when I began to do that, boy, did my walk change with that. It just, if the light was on, I could see darkness, you know, and avoid it, I kind of knew, but it's, so hard, it's stupid.
[9:22] Yeah. So to review for the tape, if no one can hear what we're talking about, so a couple of the things people brought up, which are better than my examples, I'll admit. So my favorite, Michael's, was speaking without thinking or speaking from the heart, which is, our heart is sinful.

You don't speak from the heart and just say what you want. Gossip was brought up. Gossip is really good. And Greg, you brought up idle speech. So just carelessly speaking, just rambling through a conversation or a statement without having a deliberate nature to it, a deliberate nature to please the Lord in that speech.
Some of the examples I wrote down, things like, at least for us men, well, for some of us in here, for a few of us, not yet, but berating children. So berating your children when they're being obnoxious teenagers and maybe not speaking in the way you need to to funnel them in the right direction. Speaking and agreeing to jokes or things that we shouldn't. So simply just agreeing to things. Coming around with, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, that's funny, man. You're speaking. You're agreeing to it. You're using your mouth for that. It makes a whole different statement if you're not the one laughing and talking when people are saying stuff they shouldn't. Poor responses to our wives, maybe how they're acting or something.
[10:42] They don't make us sin. God put our wives in our lives to test us and to grow us and to join with us. So maybe a poor response just because my wife's tired and upset and frustrated does not give me the right to respond in anger or frustration.

That was brought up to speaking out of an angry heart or an angry response or maybe dishonesty coming out in our speech. A lying tongue. So to kind of double down on this and to continue on Ecclesiastes 7.20, Indeed, there is not a righteous person on earth who always does good and does not ever sin.
So, no one has this mastered. Kind of beat that up a little bit. We don't have this mastered. We've established that. It's kind of back up to the last time we met way long ago.
Remember, we were in the previous section talking about faith and works, so we'll continue on with that. But James has a purpose in how he writes this letter. So it seems moving from what seemingly doesn't make sense from faith and works to not many of you should become teachers.
It seems like an interesting transition. Like, why is this a thing? It doesn't quite make sense. And it didn't quite make sense to me either. After reading through several commentaries on this, it kind of clicked.
[11:59] After Matthew Henry had a whole big block on it. And he highlights this by cautioning that those who fall victim to the type of faith discussed previously, so working toward salvation or confusing belief with salvation or having, struggling with the idea of salvation in your life and not quite understanding what that is, are more likely to fall into the trap of sin with the tongue.

So they're much more likely to engage in idle speech, angry speech, dishonest speech, gossip, if you are struggling with the idea and you don't quite know what salvation is because maybe you're not saved.
Which is what, remember how James kind of beats that down in the last, that last chapter talking about the difference between faith and works. Those talking about who, well, you know, show me your faith by your works or a show me your works by your faith.
So he kind of highlights that there and that's kind of Matthew Henry's point is that he strings, he moves right into this because it naturally flows from, if you don't know if you're saved or you're unconfident and not confident in what salvation really means and you don't understand that you just going to church doesn't mean you're saved, you're going to struggle with this and that is a, and John MacArthur likes, he goes through these, he considers them as tests, tests of genuine faith.
So if you, can you control your tongue? You see kind of how that goes together. It's kind of a test. Like, do I care what I say? Doesn't mean we don't mess up. That's a thing.
[13:31] But do I care? Does that pain me? You know, when I say curse or agree or say to something that shouldn't be, do I care? Does that pop up? Ah, man. You walk away going, I shouldn't have said that. You know it right when you see it.

Once it leaves your mouth, I shouldn't have said that one. So there's a reason for that. There's a reason this, this, you know, to get through some of the technicalities before we move into the meat.

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There's a reason that James moves into this and he flows the way he does.
So with this in mind, James' first caution is against using our speech to lord over others. So a serious caution against becoming teachers. He starts right out in verse one.
not that we shouldn't teach as we're gifted or enabled. So this shouldn't discourage somebody from teaching, the president of the Bible club, right? You shouldn't be discouraged from teaching saying, oh, I once said a bad thing.
Well, there goes my biblical teaching career. I'm never going to teach at church again. I'm never going to lead a Bible study because I swore. Well, that's exactly what the devil wants to capitalize on our self-righteousness.
[14:35] He wants that to keep us out of that because he doesn't want you to teach others. He doesn't want you to read scripture. He doesn't want you to lead any of that. He wants you to sit idly and hide. However, we should certainly be very cautious about that because the point is you should teach as you're gifted and enabled.

However, you shouldn't use your tongue to push forward our thoughts, ideas, passions, and condemnations as if they were scriptural truth. That's the key here.
So you have to be very careful as we move through scripture. And I would say as learning to do this and I appreciate you men being patient with me as I learn and struggle through this.
What a great way to learn. I can sit here with a baseball hat on eating breakfast and drinking coffee and learn how to do this. I think, Greg, you can probably back me up. It takes more time to parse through scripture and make sure what I'm putting out and I'm going to say about it aligns theologically scripturally aligns with Christ-like behavior because you can say stuff that maybe technically the verse is saying but it takes more time to figure out is that right or is that something coming out of my heart that I just want to like, yeah, you know, you really got to get yourself together, man.
go to work and get a job and shave and cut your hair and you know, it's biblical. Well, that might not be exactly correct.
[16:04] The word indeed does the work. Absolutely.

I think the key is we got to get out of the way to let the word do the work. So if our heart is coming out in our speech when we're doing it, that's where we need to be cautious. We need to make sure what we're saying in scripture is what scripture is saying and not lead people astray because I think that's why he goes in and he talks about he has a caution at the end of this because one who does not have control over what he says should be very cautious about putting himself in a teaching role and he provides a warning with this as well in that same verse.
So one who teaches hypocritically has the possibility of spreading false gospel, disillusioning the church or being an example that people will follow in a negative sense.
We should be the examples, right? Our Christ-like behavior, our lives, they should be an example. That often says more than our speech. I would say more often says more than our speech. We must be very cautious about coming up and speaking one thing one day and then maybe our lives show something different where our speech, somebody sees me in Home Depot cussing up a storm, that's a whole different, that's an example that you don't want to spread because all of this makes the sin of our speech exponentially worse when it's spread to a large group and he starts out with that initially saying not many of you should become teachers in his whole section on speech because that is a, and he'll, we'll lean into some of his examples here in a minute of how that spreads like that because keep in mind that first verse as we move through this because he kind of, he kind of builds off of this I think.
He says, we who are teachers will incur a stricter judgment. We will be judged on what we say and especially those who are in a teaching role within the church and we don't need to belabor not too long but we see examples of this like out in, out in modern church I think quite often you see the pastoral scandals, you see the pastors who are trying to be hip and with it and cool and they want to cuss or add a swear word in their sermon to show that they're, you know, hey man, I'm with it, I'm cool, look what I can do or out in town or on a Fox News interview there's somebody entirely different than they are in the pulpit.
[18:43] I see, that's how I see this. Church leaders in various forms not being the people they are they claim to be in their speech how they talk and then how you see them talk in one way that's a huge deal in my opinion it just irritates irritates me to no end when you see that not that I'm perfect but that their congregations of thousands, hundreds or more ten thousands are these fallings on the

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internet are being led astray.

We start out mentioning it and James tells us we all stumble in many ways but if anyone does not stumble in what he says, right, he's a perfect man. So moving into verse 2 now. Basically, you're perfect if you can control your tongue.
So, we already established we're not perfect so here we are on Saturday morning where we could be out boating learning how to be more Christ-like so that kind of highlights our hearts I'm glad everyone is here to do this but it also highlights how big of a deal that is.
So look what he's comparing. He's comparing perfection, sinless perfection to controlling your speech. to me, I had to pause on that for a little bit and just kind of dwell into that get a little John frame in there and look at sin and kind of look at how we talk and think of the dichotomy between that simple speech how easy is speech just something I'm saying my words right now to sinless perfection.
There's a big chasm between those at least in my mind as I kind of study through this there's a huge leap to just controlling what you say just a simple concept of just don't swear don't curse anybody don't respond to your wife in a negative way in a selfish arrogant way to sinless perfection. [20:31] That's a huge leap to me but that's what James uses as the example and he kind of builds off that in these next several examples here. So he says look at and I like the word he uses here too look at the word he uses James says if you don't stumble in what you say you are perfect able to reign in the whole body and Lucy would love this this is a men's group but she would love it if she was here talking about horses that's the the imagery he uses the word for reign in the whole body it means to lead with a bit or lead with a bridle and the same word he uses here in the example we're going to get into where it says when he says putting bits in horse's mouth it's the same word but I'm not if Mark was here he could help us out but it's two Greek words compounded together is the word reign but it comes from the Greek word from bit so it literally means to lead with a bit so lead with control you're controlling this massive animal with a four ounce piece of metal and some leather straps in ESV the term the word bridle also able to bridle this whole body so yeah perfect perfect that's closer to the imagery yep to bridle

I like that because you're putting on a you're putting on control on it you're bridling the animal you're bridling strangely his mouth maybe that was intentional you're bridling that animal putting over control over this animal and leading it wherever you want it to go so James is saying the same thing if you can reign in or if you can put a bridle on your mouth and lead your mouth you're perfect that's a big leap so to lead with a bridle so to lead your body to subdue your body to make it obey to what you want to do which I think a lot of this comes down to kind of like Michael was saying earlier is thinking before we speak is pausing having that thought so he carries this same theme into verse 3 which we'll see in just a minute here but this is kind of counter-cultural isn't it we touched on it originally you know speaking from the heart but how about
I get to say whatever I want because you know I have this thing like I have a I have a problem with anger I'm predispositioned to anger so I you know it's just it's just how I am or how about the I was thinking about this this morning as I was reading over this how about what's just my personality it's just you know I'm just an angry angry person by nature you know I'm just kind of excited and obnoxious and I'm just a loud I'm just a loud mouth by nature it's just this is like my thing and I was thinking about this what's that thank you I love that one yeah no God made you perfect and our sinful hearts took that somewhere else what's that thing called Enneagram has anyone ever heard of the Enneagram so it's a new I don't know if I can say this I don't care it's a new like hipster quasi-Christian personality analysis so this Enneagram is like it's like a group of personalities and you find out where you are in this Enneagram and that determines the course of your life right to use a little James speak that determines you know
Jeremy's type you know I don't know Jeremy what's that like a horse kinda yeah it's a bunch of hipster nonsense a bunch of chicken bones and dice and they they made it into these pop psychologists that made it into like if you fit a certain personality mold that determines the course of your life that determines who you are that's just that's just who you are so Jeremy's you know a type 3 person so Jeremy just gets to you know I'm just I'm a loud mouth angry obnoxious for the tape everyone knows Jeremy that's not Jeremy so I'm simply using that as an example but that determines well it's just that's me and that's how I act and that's that's why my life is the same way that's why I married who I married that's why my friends are the way that's why that's why you know I have a hard time with friends because I I make people mad but it's not my fault it's it's the

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Enneagram tells me I'm like this and it's just what I do it's just how I am it is your fault because it's your sinful heart that's coming out so I I was thinking about that this morning is how to compare this with what the world says so to kind of round out that section it is your fault right it is it is our sin nature that causes this and that is what allows some of the speech to come out of our mouths so in previous studies
I mentioned before everyone probably remembers how James likes to talk about up front what the issue is so he talks about up front he already says the issue is our mouth right speech and our mouth and then he spends the rest of the section just beating it down so very similar to what he's doing today up front he says here's what the issue is it's your speech and I'm going to explain to you how big of an issue this is and how important this issue is and how how damaging this issue is so he and that's kind of what he does he moves into this so remember the the chasm between um sinless perfection and simply controlling our tongue and how that seems like it doesn't seem congruent doesn't seem to go together pay attention to his first three examples here so he gives us three examples or images to kind of illustrate the tongue's power proportionally to the body and its effects so verses four and five so like Greg already kind of mentioned your ESV translation says bridal um in the original one so one of the subwords of that is bits
[26:25] I don't know what is your what is yours say Greg for bits it says bits as well so and we already kind of use this analogy a little bit but bits in horse's mouth he uses so a bit in a horse's mouth a small little piece controls this massive 1500 pound animal look at the uh the disproportional size of the thing that can control such a massive effect right and he he ramps this up as he goes through this so he ramps up the effects or the uh consequences of the small thing controlling the big thing he ramps up the consequences of those as we move through as he starts with the horse the consequences of using that bit improperly what would they be I'm the rider I use that bit poorly I use that control poorly what's that maybe it's just personal pain yep the horse throws me off you know what that stung a little bit the direction maybe you lead the horse in the wrong direction and mow down some some innocent bystanders a couple crowds people in crowds get my dad was a a police officer in Seattle for like 35 years and he said one of his favorite jobs he was a he doesn't like animals either this is interesting to me but it was a horse patrol crowd patrol he used to love controlling the animals and doing crowd control with the horses and uh

Nolan's grandpa uh he he'll tell he doesn't really like animals you know kids would always bring home those animals all the time you know random birds and we had squirrels we had all sorts of random stuff growing up not a fan not a fan at all we all got dogs and we left the house and him and my mom were stuck taking care of our dogs but he loved doing crowd control on horses he said it was just amazing the control you could have control this massive animal it was so neat to see what you could do with it but improperly used like Michael said you're gonna go mow down some people who shouldn't be mowed down so maybe personal pain or potentially you hurt a few people let's ramp this up a little bit so what is this next example ships and rudders so look at the size of the steering mechanism compared to the vessel right you got a big container ship and we'll be on some container ship one day 400 foot vessel and you got a rudder that's you know maybe the size of this room ish comparatively look at the two it literally it's just a small piece of metal that's controlling that's controlling this entire vessel a small thing and when one loses control of that rudder what's the consequences of that now
I can think of I can think of one event recently can anyone know what I'm thinking of Baltimore Baltimore the ship lost power it lost steering what happened took out the bridge a bunch of people died now imagine if that's the Titanic's a good one what if they steer it to the wrong spot they don't steer it right they smash into a reef because it says James uses the language wherever the pilot wants to go so he said look at the ships also though they are so great and driven by strong winds they are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires that pilot is choosing to steer that ship where he wants so James uses some subtleties in here as he's comparing some of these things and he's kind of telling us just like the horse where did you choose to steer that ship how did you steer that ship in the right way and we're ramping up the consequences a little bit right what's the consequences of that ship going and running aground potentially killing your crew of hundreds destruction destruction destruction on a mass scale right it grows the destruction grows bigger as he progresses through that and we could belabor the point on ships anymore but we'll kind of move into his final example you see how this grows now it's forest fires so forest fires started by a small fire a massive disruptive thing started by a seemingly

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innocuous thing maybe it even seemed to be a good thing and this is kind of interesting and this is where we shift the damage a little bit and keeping that first verse in mind here so maybe it seemed to be a good thing at first right maybe I just started a small fire to stay warm maybe I'm just getting a cigarette out of my car right
I'm not condoning smoking please nobody go smoke maybe it's just something small just something simple and innocuous and what did it turn into and look at the effects of a fire now what are some of the biggest fires in history what shoot Palisades fire that was massive how about physically destructive ones like human life the fires in Rome that Nero was accused of starting and spreading that killed thousands of people tons and we can go back through history there's that big fire in New York in the early 1900s Chicago fire yeah thank you London fire I quick google search a few weeks ago when I was cleaning up some of this and there was several of them with tens of thousands of lives taken massive the scale grows right now what's interesting here as you see the scale this grow and then you take especially this forest fires analogy which I really like and compare that to the first verse what's the spiritual damage of using our tongue improperly from a position of instruction and authority people won't be led to salvation even more damaging thank you perfect more for the tape he said it's more damaging because people are they're not they're not hearing the gospel they're not being led to salvation because of what somebody said on a stage on a TV on somewhere misdirected yep which goes back to the first chapter or I'm sorry the previous chapter right where he says talks about faith and works and they were misdirected into thinking that they're good because they once showed up to a rally and said I'm fine and moved on with their life and went to church once a month so the stakes get higher the stakes get much worse and I think on a to kind of bring this back down to to our scale
I don't know if any of us are going to be TV evangelists anytime soon but to bring this back down on our scale think of that how that looks like at work and on the same thing of of people's people's soul their soul care think about it at work what you say now how that affects somebody who knows oh he's a Christian oh he's a Christian he does this thing but man I heard that dude talking the other day I wouldn't know if that's what Christians are man I don't want anything to do with that just on a small scale at our work now look how that spreads just like the fire analogy is my favorite one in here so look how that spreads just a simple thing on what we say now look how that spreads let's pare it down even even tighter look how that spreads in our personal life how many probably Josiah and Nolan may not have any examples of this but how many have said something thoughtlessly to our wives and how much trouble did that cause because of our careless speech and how long did it take to recover from that and highlight some maybe pride in our life at least me anyway to work through that problem
[34:35] I used elsewhere Jeremy it's like a bullet leaving a gun you can't stuff it back in it's gone absolutely Michael well I carry on that what what do we think about James's illustrations does anyone see these in our own lives the simple leading to massive the simple leading to destructive the simple word the thoughtless sentence the thoughtless statement leading to a big problem does anybody see this in their own lives this is not a confessional but it can actually be something that explodes like a good illustration but as much as you notice that you did that it can get you so depressed and turned inward that it begins to destroy your own pursuit of God and your own your own faith and that's not good yeah maybe that maybe I mentioned earlier maybe like some self righteousness of

I shouldn't say that thing but I said it and now I'm awful and I'm bad and I'm terrible and I can't and now you're ineffective you said it starts to destroy you because instead of resting in I think what you said Michael resting in God's grace and forgiveness and moving past that now you're resting in the thing you said or the thing you did I always talk about in Hebrews chapter 12 it has progressed it tells us to pursue peace with all men and holiness without which no one will see God it's all about that perfection that you were saying earlier God wants to create that perfection and we won't be perfect this side of heaven what boy does he want us to go after it yep that's it's the journey not the end result we're never going to be perfect but am I following through on some of these tests and these challenges and these trials how James starts and using those as opportunities to control my tongue to control my speech think about what I say before it comes out absolutely right so he continues into verse 6 he says and the tongue is a fire the very world of unrighteousness the tongue is set among our body parts as that which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of our life and is set on fire by hell powerful language that's why I read through this one that's a pretty

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powerful statement talking about defiling our body switch over to Matthew 15 chapter 15 17 17 through 19 real quickly we're going to start doing some page turn here in a minute so he Jesus has some background so Jesus is kind of rebuking some Pharisees here as a result of them this is where if you go back to the first part of chapter 15 the Pharisees ask why do your disciples break the tradition of elders for they do not wash their hands when they eat bread they're all up in arms because they didn't do the ceremonial cleansing and they didn't do this thing you see James theme the kind of the works transitioning into this and as Jesus works through this conversation he gets down to verse 17 he says do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated but the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and those defile the man for out of the heart come evil thoughts murders adulteries fornications theft thefts false witness slanders pretty straightforward in Jesus own words so what comes out of our mouth is what's defiling us it's not that we ate in context here not you know respond to the Pharisees is not something they ate or if they had dirt on their hands or something like that it's what comes out of us because what does Jesus say what proceeds out of the mouth come from the heart and Jeremiah 17 9 we know the condition of our heart don't worry there's hope there's a lot of darkness here but we're going to move past this that was Matthew chapter 15 verses 17 through 9 and we already talked about Jeremiah 17 9 I mentioned we did that earlier because we got to jump start on this because y'all were already ahead but the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick who can understand it so the heart is not to be trusted so we must not trust what comes out of our mouths as a result of emotion but instead scripture gives us things we should do now we're going to move into that so what of this we're going to do a little bit of reading and I'll move through the last part last part a little faster so if no one why don't you look up colossians 4 through 6 for me get ready on that one can someone else do ephesians 4 29 4 29 it's a really good helicopter if anyone wants to you got it I won't do all these about proverbs 15 1 thank you jeremy i'll do i'll do i'll do the last one james 119 unless somebody wants it we'll kind of rapid fire through these to see what we know we shouldn't be trusting what comes out of our hearts and that emotion we feel that anger the rage the maybe the desire to please man in what we say we want to say something be part of the group be cool be we just we got to we got to do it idle speech kind of greg was telling us just idly going through a conversation but what do we do about it so no one why don't you start us out in colossians 4 6 read that again so we could spend all day on that verse I love that one so I started with it so let our speech be seasoned with grace as though with salt we go into the whole everyone's probably heard this great great salt is a preservative primarily so how do you preserve the effects of that speech when you say something to somebody without without letting it taint the whole batch or taint the entire event like how do I control the fire that needs to happen to keep me warm to feed something without letting it turn into a forest fire seasoning it with grace so all our speech coming out of our mouths should be graceful and Michael you were kind of touching on this previously it should be graceful it should be gentle it should be loving how about
[42:48] Ephesians 429 so the very first part of this I wish Mark was here to pick on about Greek but it starts with the word let the word let denotes permission you are giving your mouth permission you are letting the thing come out of your mouth you are allowing the thing to come out you have control over it you are letting it you've given permission for your mouth to speak something that shouldn't it's if anyone wants to nerd out on it so it's implied in the language use it's not a word for word the word let is the language use in Greek the implication is there that you're allowing something to happen so when you give your mouth permission to say something that as he just read Josiah just read is unwholesome or unwholesome speech but only saying something for building others up right has anyone ever met anyone that you met anyone like this who's so good at what they say they're somehow like always part of the conversation they're still gracious when they talk they're enjoyable to be around they're good conversationalists and they never say anything negative or down to people but they can still joke they're still smiling they're still laughing you ever met people like that yeah some people are very gifted in speech just very incredible and they have so much self-control over what they they're so deliberate with Greg starts out today talking about non-deliberate speech

I like that description they're very deliberate with what they say it's just so right right on cue it's always graceful it's always building people up it's always kind seasoned with salt it preserves the entire relationship how about Proverbs 15 1 has no ever seen this in their own lives someone's mad

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at you or frustrated they come into the conversation already assuming something or angry about something marriage this can be tough in marriage sometimes when husband and wife are having challenges with things and there's two ways to respond gently or not gently I've certainly seen the effects of not responding gently even if it may be justified even if the world says that harsh direct answer is the right thing to do it doesn't work it doesn't turn out truth without who said this truth without grace or truth without love is just mean plain and simple it's like hey man you're you know you're worth this piece of garbage and you're just a dirty sinner well yeah we all are but that's not a very good way to say it is it you're not going to get a whole lot of a not catching a whole lot of fish with that how about
Matthew 12 34 you brood of vipers how can you speak good when you are evil for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks it's again another incidence where I found a lot of these where Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for seemingly false actions false speech or speaking good but still doing bad so that deceptive speech I can't remember who said before talking about lying or misleading speech so that deceptive speech they were they were speaking the right things and saying the right things but then turning around and doing something different and I said I do I was about to say who got James 1 19 but I think I said I got that didn't I I wasn't ready and James 1 19 says this you know my beloved brethren but everyone must be quick to hear slow to speak and slow to anger along with all the practical advice we kind of work through with some of these verses that one
I think at least in a personal sense helps me the most is waiting before I speak pause we have we do a lot of business communication stuff we do some seminars and things for briefing people and frankly some good things about how to have meaningful conversations with people not approaching the subject of good versus evil because none of this is necessarily geared toward a biblical thing it's geared toward business communication conversation but talking about there's a method they say called pause think say I couldn't remember the order of it for a second so when someone says something Greg says hey the business deal is I want you to provide two helicopters for ten million dollars and you're going to do it tomorrow that's a little aggressive and maybe there's some anger and frustration laced in there because maybe the deal's not going well so the idea is that before I say man you're crazy what are you thinking dude I say pause yeah yeah yeah maybe that's the right answer but I pause I think about it I think of the right adjectives I ponder yeah yeah maybe that's the answer I think about it like we're all doing verbally thinking right now I think about it and then I respond say hey I appreciate your offer and now to pull this back into the topic I season my speech with grace I'm patient I'm humble when I respond I don't speak misleading like the Pharisees did I'm honest and truthful say hey Greg that's a great I'm glad you're here and I'm glad you're here willing to deal with this helicopter problem we have and we do need to buy some helicopters I think market value shows us there might be some differences in prices with where you're at and where
[49:10] I'm at so what I'm going to do is do some research and get back to you on a different proposal right or whatever the case we're making business language here but how is this exactly the same and we're all men here most of us have been married quite a while how much how is this it's almost identical right in the marriage how is it identical wife comes back to me she's frustrated she doesn't cause us to sin right she's had a long day you know she's tired or whatever something's going on she says two helicopters for ten million dollars you know which is crazy and you're like wow what do I do well start with James 119 and I'm slow to speak and I pause then I take in some of our other scriptural references and I think about it and I respond with grace with love with kindness so now I am letting right I'm giving permission was that I think that was 429 Ephesians 429

I'm giving permission for my mouth to speak but I'm forcing my mouth to speak in a way that is glorifying God in my response and is giving my wife grace or I'm using our wives as an example this applies to anybody so I'm giving grace to them like Michael you're talking about it allows grace to take place it allows God to work in the situation instead of me controlling it with my tongue so I give that space for the Lord to work maybe on the other person's heart maybe probably always on my heart as well maybe I started the whole problem so continuing through verse 6 here James kind of foot stomps these points a little bit you'll see kind of the word use carries down from verses 4 and 5 verse 6 again the tongue is a fire very word of unrighteous tongue is set among our body parts that defiles the whole body which we kind of talked about and sets on fire the course of our life so he's using that he's carrying back in his previous two verses talking about that small little statement you

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said sets on fire the nautical or the course of our life the language used there is nautical terms determining the path or determining the way it will go so he's kind of carrying those in he's kind of foot stomping a little bit as he carries those verses back in in the original language so you're blowing up you're burning down that course that your life could take by such a small thing so disproportional to the course it's going to take such a little disproportional comment has ruined the entire course of the ship and has burned it to the ground right now you have a ship on fire full of diesel fuel running into the reef you can imagine that you put the my son's over there giggling for people on the tape because he's doing a maritime school and it's probably the worst disaster you could have on a ship is unsteerable ship heading into an obstacle burning to the ground full of diesel fuel doesn't get much worse than that fellas so when he says he kind of finishes that verse and says and is set on fire by hell a couple commentators kind of pointed out set on fire by hell who is the embodiment of hell who embodies everything that gets one to hell jeremy says satan that is you're the winner that is the correct answer because who influences our thoughts our actions and our speech not controls them but who influences them satan does satan controls or not controls but influences our speech influences our thought process our minds so as those unwholesome thoughts come into our minds and we want to respond in speech that's interesting great that because as much as anything what's the greatest influence of sin is satan but how it's embodied is through people that person being steered that direction allowing satan to do that work in us and so I just like and I notice in life that I can be embodied of the wrong things said and the wrong things done and I never want to do that first

Michael that's a perfect example it kind of goes back if we can remember way long ago where James is talking about the test of blame and the origin of temptation and remember in chapter 1 verse 13 let no one say when he is being tempted I mean tempted of God for God cannot be tempted by evil he himself tempts no one but each one is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own lust and when lust is conceived it gives birth to sin when sin is accomplished it brings forth death I remember the analogy I gave the test the temptation and the sin so the test maybe the Lord may be using something to sanctify you maybe something there he's allowing a thing to happen in your life the temptation remember according to

James does that temptation come from God if you back up a couple verses or that same verse remember no it doesn't because let no one say when I'm being tempted I am being tempted by God he says nope you're not that temptation comes from within when you give way to that lust that internal sin and you allow that to reign in your body you let it right I get stuck on we could spend all day in James even the old parts of James so I gotta be careful here we gotta move on so we know our speech is a reflection of what is in our hearts and we know who can influence that the devil so relying on what scripture tells us is paramount that's why I went through those verses there and I'll say them again for the end of the tape if there's anyone taking notes so I would say that if this is a trouble area for you or you struggle with this everyone has a problem with their speech we all do according to

James these are good verses to commit to memory they're short they're pithy they're to commit to memory something that I may consider memorizing I'll read those out so it's Colossians 4.6 Ephesians 4.29 Proverbs 15.1 and Proverbs 10.32 Matthew 12.34 and James 11.19 James moves into verses 7 and 8 and tells us the obvious he now starts compare our speech and the effects of it so he says we've tamed every creature birds fish reptiles all of them we've tamed everything but no one can tame the tongue you think about what we've done in life like we have a while ago [56:48] I read Moby Dick a huge massive book I read the kids version so it was like it was Lucy's we were trying to get her read it even in a child's version of Moby Dick the imagery of how they were capturing these massive whales 200 years ago whales as big as the boat and they were jumping down off the boat onto this massive creature and hacking up the whale in the water it was pretty gruesome all in all but they had tamed the largest creature on earth at the time and they were hacking it up for food and oil and everything else we have literally tamed everyone dinosaurs are no more there's a lot of you know Christian theories on why that is you know the earth changed some of it changed so after the flood it was not the same food sources were different they probably couldn't eat as much and what do you do when there is a lion in your backyard you kill it or you shoo it off or you do something with it so what do you do when there's a velociraptor in your backyard you kill it you get rid of it you you tame it you control it you do something we have literally tamed everything and we are

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God commanded us to subdue the creatures in a biblical righteous way but we have literally tamed everything on earth there's nothing that's not under our control that we can't control we can catch sharks great whites so the tongue then as he says is full of deadly poison why can't we tame it kind of on the same vein we're already on John Calvin says since the tongue cannot be restrained there must be some secret fire of hell hidden in it I like that as I was reading through that God can control the tongue essentially with a transformed heart resting in the power of the Holy Spirit are we then able to use our tongue to glorify God so this is kind of the transition there where we shift to the spiritual nature of this and I think this can be a good indication of someone's heart it doesn't mean that the next day a new
Christian wakes up he'll instantly stop cursing all and I wake up the next day and it's like that's it I'm done I swear maybe maybe God works on our life that way I've actually seen some people's transition be pretty instant it was pretty incredible to watch but by and large some of our sin takes a while for us to work through sanctification as God works on our hearts but the difference is you know you know when you say a word or have a bad response to your spouse or a bad response to your child or somebody at work you know you walk away going yep shouldn't have done that I knew that was wrong can you think I can think of one right now within recently within a week or two of like that was dumb shouldn't have said that as I was walking away thinking about it so the difference is spiritually you know the difference now and I'm not talking about business language or having a hard conversation with someone like was that the right strategy to use
I'm talking about you know the speech you did I'm pointing I shouldn't be pointing because it's actually like this I write these for me by the way you know the speech you did that wasn't graceful that wasn't patient that you didn't pause and think no that's not right not in how you know sometimes saying things to people or having a difficult conversation that's hard like how do I do this or how do I talk to somebody hopefully you're relying on God's discernment that he's given you and you're praying about it and reading scripture and that will help you through some of those things but the way you you you give your!
permission so as we allow that process of sanctification to work we should be gaining the desire to please the Lord and most of the time that has to do with our mouth and what comes out of our mouth so we should be looking to please the Lord with our speech and that's the difference is an unbeliever walking through town they don't want to please maybe they're holding to some cultural value of not swearing in a business setting or holding to some value of professionalism maybe or just being nice you see the be kind stickers on everyone's car just be kind be nice be a good neighbor maybe people are holding to that and they're trying not to curse or swear at that but does that prohibit all the other things we talked about how about being deceitful or lying or gossiping or maybe an angry response maybe they're not cursing or swearing but there's still something else going on so I think speech in totality is a good indication of the nature of our heart not that we won't mess up on occasion but is your speech characterized by constant cursing swearing strife dishonesty anger it might be a good indication of where your heart is at not that we don't struggle with those things at times but it might be a good indication to look at where somebody you know maybe who says they're a believer they say hey oh yeah
[62:27] I'm a Christian I I go to church you know wife and I go to church on occasion but they've got a mouth like a sailor and the military! So even in the military setting you can pick people out Christians in the military are very kind just like everywhere else but you can pick people out you know people who can control their tongue speak professionally work well their hearts are a little different and you can see it in their speech So James says with our tongue we bless the Lord one moment and curse people the next that with our mouths because who are we made in the image of so for Jeff we're going to go back into

Genesis here chapter 1 verse 26 then God said let us make mankind in our image according to our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every crawling thing that crawls in his image we're cursing his creation with our mouths and at the same time singing praises to God that's where he moves in this last you see just like the dichotomy between the small controlling the massive consequence now we see the immense spiritual dichotomy of cursing my brother and worshiping God you see this huge shift and he uses these two obvious things that just as he says ought not be blessing and cursing from the same mouth it shouldn't be this way we should take careful notice notice of that ratio

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I'm using a lot of math terms here sorry could be offensive to some I know but how much of each is coming from us so that ratio there not to get confused with previous chapter talking about works but it's not like I said more good things today than I said bad things don't let that trap fall into your mind the question should be am I pleasing God with what's coming out of my mouth in the moment am I pleasing God how I'm talking am I pleasing God with not talking am I pleasing God with pausing what am I doing that the way he puts it really highlights the hypocrisy if you think about that you just want to be consistent and consistent the right way that that's perfect yeah because standing up here saying this and I go to work and say something at work that's embarrassing maybe they don't know it maybe they don't know at work but in my mind it's exactly what I'm thinking what kind of hypocrisy am I full of

I say this one thing and I come up here and teach to get a hold of your tongues men and then I go and do the same thing that's absolutely it so it's not congruent for these two types of speech to come from a Christian so he drives this kind of final point with three examples and we'll kind of move through here kind of quickly but a spring a freshwater spring has everyone ever gone hiking and seen freshwater springs or a freshwater pool in the mountains that come from underground spring a lot of these original bottled water we bottle water genius we're selling water in plastic bottles to give to people it's free it's incredible you know where some of those things came from is like freshwater springs in the mountains they realized that some of these underground springs that were pushing up were already kind of naturally purified and they found they were naturally clean but from those same freshwater springs that people are billionaires over now

I wish I was smart enough to do that can you get salt water out of that same spring it's silly right obviously we know that it's silly to think about but again that's James kind of broad explanation of no of course you can't so therefore why should your speech be this one moment and this another moment you can't mix salt water and fresh they don't occupy the same space how about a fig tree can a fig tree produce olives there's not much to say I know it's silent because what do you say about that we can make this cultural if we wanted like can one thing be another no it cannot God made it one way God made a fig tree to produce figs and an olive tree to produce olives just the way it is can a vine can a grape vine produce figs no he's using these clear obvious broad descriptions to show from his previous verse to show how far apart our speech two patterns of speech are one pattern of speech is cursing our brother the next pattern of speech is worshiping [67:56] God should not be the case friends so my favorite illustration to think of is going through this whole thing as we kind of wrap this up here is that forest fire so as we think about this and you think how fires start how they progress how they spread I mentioned before all too often right we let something escape our lips and a big mess comes from a stupid comet something we shouldn't have said something that shouldn't have left our mouths like Jeremy said once that bullet leaves the gun you're not getting it back so if it could be so destructive just like a bullet imagine you have the power of a gun in your hand and Jeremy can tell you this there's a lot of shooting how careful are you with that gun when it's loaded that speech is primed in your mind the guns in your hand the bullets in the chamber dual action maybe the hammer is cocked how careful are you with that gun extremely cautious there's special procedures you follow safety rules you do you never flag your you know your buddy you're with whatever there's a whole careers built off gun safety there's a whole mantra around gun safety because once that bullet leaves it's gone and you somebody's life is at stake right it's that critical how much more critical is it now for that word leaving our mouths that can cause so much more damage as you said previously spiritual damage how much more damage can I be somebody's salvation is at stake with the words of my mouth how much more should we make a thought of controlling that thing before it leaves our mouth how much more should we pause and follow those safety rules right in Ephesians 4 29

James 119 so I'll leave you some practical advice that I all too often forget myself I've mentioned this before I don't remember what study this was on or maybe it was in a sermon but I heard it somewhere and I was like oh I like that and I kept using it it was something to do with our thought life it might have been in Nehemiah in our prayer life but I originally said it's really hard to think angry thoughts about people when you're praying for them right it's really hard to be angry you know at or frustrated with your spouse or someone else when you're praying for them and praying for this it's really hard for those two thoughts to occupy that same space kind of see the similarity here it it's tough it's really hard to say something dumb when you're praying for the other person you're standing there going or praying saying Lord give me the patience give me the graciousness

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and the gentleness to respond to this in a manner that glorifies you it's really tough to say silly things when you're praying in your heart thinking those things it's tough the two thoughts don't occupy the same space more practical advice but so as we kind of wrap this up here so we talked about all these different ways that
James highlighted the seemingly innocuous part of our body that's our tongue or refers to our speech is what he's referring to and the effects of that speech and the control of our life that that tongue has it's massive right he starts with a horse then the ship then the all-consuming fire he kind of ramps up into that and he talks about why that and he transitions into why this shouldn't be the case right why should this not be the case because we're cursing man who's made in God's image we're cursing our brothers sisters who are made in God's image or lying to them we're deceiving them and then we go to church and worship God or we come here and teach or we claim just simply claim to be a Christian and do one thing the chasm between those is broad and James now then describes how kind of silly that is that that's the case why is that the case does it ought not be that's like having a fig tree with olives on it he's kind of he's almost being silly as he's saying this to the group it's it's kind of almost laughable no apple tree can't have oranges on it that's just ridiculous what are you doing because those two patterns of speech ought not be that way and he rounds that out telling us it just shouldn't be that way we should have control over that speech we should be thinking what we're doing with that speech glorifying God or cursing man where do we fall on that spectrum hopefully as sanctification takes place and we move along in our walk and we allow the Lord to work in our lives that pendulum starts to move toward glorifying God and we're really close as we're stepping toward glorifying God in our speech all the time and it's not this big swing from one way or another it's
I'm glorifying God in my speech we're not perfect the occasional sin happens I'm glorifying God in my speech I'm not going to let that happen again if the same thing is happening over and over right that's crazy town so that should be an issue well thank you everyone for your patient audience while I sit here and rambled through James first part of three thank you for your participation let's pray real quick dear Lord thank you for this time together thank you for your word thank you for scripture for giving us the answers thank you for allowing us not to have to guess through these things and guess on what we do thank you for allowing us to be born in this church age where we have scripture and we have the bible and we have ready access to your word and ready access to what to do about these certain situations and what to do about struggling with our speech God we pray Lord you help us to commit scripture to memory and commit your commit your word to our hearts and think about it and dwell on it and ponder it as we run into these challenging situations
God pray for the men here that you guard their hearts and minds as we move out into the world and we be that light into the world that you've commanded us to be we pray God that our speech is tempered with grace and humility and thoughtfulness and graciousness as we speak to others our spouses our children our friends and co-workers pray God that we are the light of the world and our speech reflects that we pray these things in Jesus name Amen

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