

WORDS – LIFE or DEATH

ROBERT MORRIS TEACHING SERIES

Lesson #4 – AMAZING FACTS

Lesson #4 – Words – Amazing Facts – Robert Morris – This complete study contains-Scripture Verses, Commentary/Outlines/Video Notes and Review Questions prepared by: Salt Shakin Sister Outreach & Ministry: www.saltshakinsister.com

NKJV SCRIPTURE VERSE-James 3:1-13

James 3:1-13 The Untamable Tongue

³ My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. ³ Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶ And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening?

¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.

Lesson #4 – Studied with Commentary/Notes James 3:1-13

- When the bible talks about the tongue, it uses 5 figures of speech:
- Bridle
 - Rudder
 - Fire
 - Wild untamable animals
 - A fresh water springs



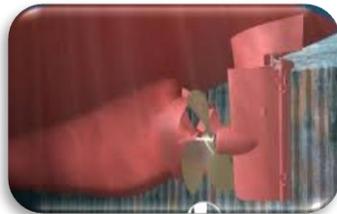
Behold also the ships - This illustration is equally striking and obvious. A ship is a large object. It seems to be unmanageable by its vastness, and it is also impelled by driving storms. Yet it is easily managed by a small rudder; and he that has control of that, has control of the ship itself.

So, with the tongue. It is a small member as compared with the body; in its size not unlike the rudder as compared with the ship. Yet the proper control of the tongue in respect to its influence on the whole man, is not unlike the control of the rudder in its power over the ship.

Which though they be so great - So great in themselves, and in comparison, with the rudder. Even such bulky and unwieldy objects are controlled by a very small thing.

And are driven of fierce winds - By winds that would seem to leave the ship beyond control. It is probable that by the "fierce winds" here as impelling the ship, the apostle meant to illustrate the power of the passions in impelling man. Even a man under impetuous passion would be restrained, if the tongue is properly controlled, as the ship driven by the winds is by the helm.

Yet are they turned about with a very small helm - The ancient rudder or helm was made in the shape of an oar. This was very small when compared with the size of the vessel - about as small as the tongue is as compared with the body.



Behold also the ships, which though they be so great,.... Of so large a bulk, of such a prodigious size, and are such unwieldy vessels: **and are driven of fierce winds**; with great vehemence, rapidity, and swiftness: **yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth**; the helm, or tiller of a ship, is a beam or piece of timber fastened into the rudder, and so coming forward into the steerage, where he that stands at helm steers the ship, who is here called the governor; or "he that directs", as the word may be rendered; that is, that steers; the word for "helm" is translated rudder in Acts 27:40, and the helm or tiller is sometimes, though improperly, called the rudder itself; and this is very small, in comparison of the bulk of the ship that is guided by it.

Aristotle calls it "a small helm", as the apostle here does, and accounts for it how large ships should be moved and steered by it. And so, though the tongue is to the rest of the body as a small helm to a large ship, yet, like that, it has great influence over the whole body, to check it when it is carrying away with the force of its appetites and passions; and so churches, societies, and bodies of Christians, which are large and numerous, and are like ships upon the ocean, tossed to and fro with tempests, driven by Satan's temptations and the world's persecution, and ready to be carried away with the wind of false doctrine, yet are influenced and directed aright by those that are at the helm, the faithful ministers of the word, who say to them, this is the way, walk in it.

Sailboats steer by means of the rudder, a vertical, blade-like appendage mounted either on the transom (the flat surface of the stern) or under the boat. In both cases the rudder works by deflecting water flow: when the helmsman—the person steering, as likely female as male—turns the rudder, the water strikes it with increased force on one side, decreased force on the other. The rudder moves in the direction of lower pressure. As the rudder goes, so goes the stern, and the boat turns.

James 3:6-And the tongue is a fire

It is like **a fire, very useful in its place, to warm and comfort**; so is the tongue in Christian conversation, and in the ministry of the word; the hearts of God's children burn within them, while they are talking together, and while the Scriptures of truth are opening to them; **but as fire should be carefully watched, and kept,** *so should men take heed to their ways, that they sin not with their tongue, and keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from speaking guile.*

For as **fire kindles and rises up into a flame**, so unchaste, angry, and passionate words, stir up the flame of lust, anger, envy, and revenge; and as fire is of a spreading nature, so are lies, scandal, and evil reports vented by the tongue; and as fire devours all that comes in its way, such are the words of an evil tongue; and therefore are called devouring words, ([Psalms 52:4](#)) they devour the good names of men, and corrupt their good manners, and destroy those who make use of them; and what wood is to fire, and coals to burning coals, that are whisperers, tale bearers, backbiters, and contentious persons to strife, ([Proverbs 26:20](#) [Proverbs 26:21](#))

A world of iniquity;

that is, as the world is full of things, and full of sin, for it lies in wickedness, so is the tongue full of iniquity; there is a world of it in it; it abounds with it; it cannot well be said how much sin is in it, and done, or occasioned by it; as cursing of men, and with a multitude of profane and dreadful oaths; obscene, filthy, and unchaste words; angry, wrathful, and passionate ones; lies, flatteries, reproaches, backbitings, whisperings, tale bearings

When Adam sinned, **God laid hold on him, and slit his tongue into two parts**, and said unto him, the wickedness which is, or shall be in the world, thou hast begun with an evil tongue; wherefore I will make all that come into the world know that thy tongue is the cause of all this."

So is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body: *a whole nation, filling it with contention, strife, division, and confusion*; and the body, the church, by sowing discord, making parties, and spreading errors and heresies, whereby the temple of God is defiled.

David Guzik Commentary

(3-6) The power of the tongue.

Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

We put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us: A small bit in the mouth controls a strong horse. A small rudder turns a large ship. Even so, if we have control over our tongue it is an indication that we have control over our self. Whoever can control the tongue can *bridle the whole body* (James 3:2).

The bit and the rudder are small but extremely important. If they are not controlled the entire horse is out of control and the entire ship is out of control. It is possible for something as small as the tongue is to have tremendous power for either good or evil.

You don't solve the problem of an unruly horse by keeping it in the barn, or the problem of a hard-to-steer ship by keeping it tied to the dock. In the same way, even a vow of silence is not the ultimate answer for the misuse of our tongue.

If the tongue is like a bit in the mouth of a horse or the rudder on a ship, it leaves us with the question: *Who or what holds the reins, or who or what directs the rudder?* Some people have *no* hand on the reins or rudder, and therefore say whatever comes into mind. Others direct their tongue from their emotions or from aspects of their carnal nature. James points us towards having the Spirit of God, working through the new man, set directing hands on the reins and rudder that is our tongue.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: The fire of the tongue has been used to burn many. Children are told *sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me*. But that child's rhyme isn't really true; the bitter pain of a word spoken against us can hurt us for a lifetime, long after a broken bone has healed.

"In the two former illustrations, animals and ships are controlled by small objects; in this last illustration, a huge forest is destroyed by a tiny spark. The tongue likewise can either control or destroy." (Burdick)

What others say to us and what we say to others can last a long time, for good or for evil. **The casual sarcastic or critical remark can inflict a lasting injury on another person. The well-timed encouragement or compliment can inspire someone for the rest of their life.**

Proverbs speaks of the person who doesn't consider the destructive power of his words. *Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "I was only joking!"* (Proverbs 26:18-19).

iv. Again, James isn't telling us to never speak or to take a vow of silence; in many ways that would be *easier* than exercising true self-control over the tongue. The bridle, the rudder, and the fire can all do tremendous *good* when they are controlled properly.

The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: There aren't many sins that don't involve talking in some way. "It is though all the wickedness in the whole world were wrapped up in that little piece of flesh." (Burdick)

In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom. (Proverbs 10:19-21)

3. (7-8) The difficulty of taming the tongue. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Every kind of beast and bird... has been tamed by mankind: A wild animal can be more easily tamed than the tongue. In fact, James tells us that **no man can tame the tongue**.

*The human spirit has incredible capacity for sacrifice and self-control. Sometimes we hear a desperate survival story of someone who cuts off their own leg to get free from a tree that has fallen on them, and then they make it to a hospital for medical treatment. Yet that same man can't **tame the tongue** perfectly.*

No man can tame the tongue: Nevertheless, the tongue can be brought under the power and the control of the Holy Spirit. We might say that only God Himself is mightier than the human tongue! *It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison:* The untamable tongue is even more dangerous when we consider the **deadly poison** it can deliver. "The poison of the tongue is no less deadly, it murders men's reputations by the slanders it utters.

4. (9-12) The contradictory character of the tongue.

With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men: The tongue can be used for the highest calling (to **bless our God**) and it can be used for the lowest evil (to **curse men**). In those who are born again, it shouldn't be said that **out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing**.

Peter's tongue confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God *and* denied Jesus with curses. John said, "Little children, love one another" *and* he wanted to say the word to bring down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village.

These things ought not to be so: Our speech should be consistently glorifying to God. We shouldn't use one vocabulary or one tone of speaking at church and a different one at home or on the job. Like a spring of water, our mouths shouldn't **send forth fresh... and bitter from the same opening**.

Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh: James points to the ultimate *impossibility* of such a contradiction. If bad fruit and bitter water continue to come forth, it means that there is no contradiction. The tree is bad and the spring is bad. **Jesus taught in Matthew 12:34-37 that a man's words are a reliable revelation of his inner character. What we say can indicate what we are.**

Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives: "It would be a monstrosity, a thing to be wondered at, and stared at as unnatural and absurd if a fig tree started bearing olive berries and it is just as unnatural for a Christian to live in sin. Can he so live as to bear the fruits of iniquity instead of the fruits of righteousness? God forbid that it should be so!" (Spurgeon)

- You can label a fig tree "Olive Tree" and that will not make it an olive tree.
- You can trim a fig tree to look like an olive tree, and that will not make it an olive tree.
- You can treat a fig tree like an olive tree, and that will not make it an olive tree.
- You can surround a fig tree with many olive trees, and that will not make it an olive tree.
- You can transplant that fig tree to the Mount of Olives, and that would not make it an olive tree.

James 3:1-13 – Verse by Verse Outline

- **Verse 1.** My brethren/sisters, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.
- Jesus warned to whom much is given, from him much will be required and to whom much has been committed to him, they will be held more.
- Tested more – Judged stricter
 - To stumble in words:
 - Boasting
 - Exaggeration
 - Selective Reporting
 - Criticism
 - Slander
 - Cruelty
 - Anger
 - Gossip
 - 2 Faced
 - Insincere words
- Things we need to pray to be active in our Christian lives
 - Help me be faithful
 - Humility
 - Endurance in testing
 - Grace filled daily
 - Forgiving
 - Repentant heart
 - Sensitive to the Holy Spirit voice
 - Be renewed in our spirit daily
 - Nonjudgmental
 - Not easily offended
 - Want to receive rewards God has for us when we get to heaven!

- **Verse 2** – We all stumble IN many things- IF anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body.
 - IF – that’s a big word! IF = we will for sure stumble as long as we live in this flesh and on this earth. No one is perfect but Jesus.
 - We all stumble (fall, sin, fail, evil conduct)
 - IN many things (actions-lifestyles-attitudes)
 - IF anyone does not stumble in word (tongue, speech, mouth) he is perfect
 - He is able
 - To bridle the whole body
- Bridle you mouth, stay out of trouble with God and others; have a good, clean heart – your heart shows up when you speak words.
- What’s in my heart?
 - Uglier than I want to admit and repent daily
- **Verse 3** – Indeed
 - We put bits in horses’ mouths
 - So they obey us
 - We turn their whole body with a bit
- What is the bit we need to put in our mouths?
 - The Word (bit)
 - Be filled with Holy Spirit daily
 - Transformation of heart through growing in Christ and His Word
- What helps us OBEY God?
 - The word in our heart
 - What’s in our heart comes out of our mouth
 - Confession
 - Repentance-crucify the flesh
 - Share the gospel
 - Be a light in the darkness
 - Be thankful
 - Give him praise throughout your day
 - **Dress with the full armor of God-dress for battle!**

- **Verse 4** – Look at the ships
 - They are very large
 - They are driven by fierce winds
 - They are turned by a small rudder
 - They go where the pilot desires
- **Verse 5- The tongue is a little member**
 - Boasts great things
 - Creates a great forest fire
 - (Little spark of flames ignites flames that kill and destroy all in its path)
- Small in size (rudder small in size) (Horse bit)
- Large in harm it can do (rudder and bit control the large ship or horse)
 - Boasts – pride, criticism, judgmental, sharp, rude, bitter, anger, lashing out at others.
 - Creates – hurt and offense toward those on the receiving end of what the tongue says -destruction -burns like a fire
 - Fierce winds would be the personal trials and tests/ temptations/ sins we deal with. Evil that comes against us.
 - We wrestle against principalities and powers of the air.
 - Be filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Be filled with the Fruit of the Holy Spirit
- Watch your tongue, It's in a wet place where it is easy to slip.
- **Verse 6**
 - The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. (look at definitions-fire= weapon, destruction, violence, sin.
 - In the world the definition of fire is satan's counterfeit= really good, hot, sexy, cool, awesome.
 - The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body (defile=spoils, pollutes, poisons, violates)
 - And sets on fire the course of nature
 - And is set on fire by hell.

➤ Verses 7

- For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

- Every Kind:
 - Beast
 - Bird
 - Reptile
 - Sea creatures

- Is tamed by man

➤ Holy Spirit POWER is our only HOPE for controlling the tongue

- We have to pray every day, all day, Lord help with guarding my mouth

➤ Morris say:

- PAUSE
- PONDER
- PRAY
 - BEFORE SPEAKING

➤ Verse 8

- But no man can tame the tongue, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison

- How come man can't tame the tongue?
- What are some unruly evils?
- What does deadly mean?
- What does poison mean?

➤ Verse 9

- With our tongue we:

- Bless God
- Curse Men
 - Men were made in the image of God

➤ Verse 10

- Out of the same mouth proceeds:

- Blessings
- Cursing's
 - These things ought not be so

➤ Verse 11

- A spring – what does it produce?
 - Fresh Water
 - Bitter Water
 - This should not be so

➤ Verse 12

- What does a fig tree bear?
 - Olives or
 - A grapevine
 - What does spring water produce?

➤ Verse 13

- Who is wise and understanding among you?
 - Show good conduct
 - Let good works be done in
 - Meekness
 - Wisdom

Lesson #4 Studied with Commentary/Notes

John 1:14 The Word became flesh when Jesus was born. He always existed as the Son of God. He chose to come into the world in a human body. He lived here 33 years.

- Glory=the bright, shining seen on God when Jesus was on earth. He veiled His glory IN a body of flesh.
- His MORAL glory- radiance of His perfect life and character.
- The VISIBLE outshining of His glory – took place on the Mt. of Transfiguration. His face shone like the sun and His garments gleaming bright.
- Jesus is the Son of God.
- He is equal to God.
- He is full of Grace and Truth

Psalms 107:20 and Proverbs 18:20-22

- Israel, the nation was sick at this time; some were fools suffering God's judgment because of their own iniquities.
- A godly remnant was praying and waiting for the Hope of Israel. God sent forth His word and healed them. His word here may refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We sometimes say a man has to eat his words. If good=yielded satisfaction, rewards are according to his speech.
- The tongue has potential for good and evil
- The word "good" is implied before good wife finds a treasure – The Lord's favor.
- While David wrote verses 20-30 in Proverbs, he was speaking prophetically through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit about the one who would be both his Son and His Lord. (Matthew 22:41-46)
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➤ **Romans 10:8-10**

- The Bible gives no encouragement to anyone who believes “with” Mental reservations. “I’ll take Jesus as my Savior, but I don’t want to crown Him Lord over all my life”.
- When we present the gospel, we must maintain that faith is the sole condition of justification
- With the heart one believes unto righteousness. It is not a mere intellectual assent but a genuine acceptance with one’s whole inward being.
- With the mouth confession is made unto salvation, the believer publicly confesses the salvation he has already received.
- Confession is not a condition of salvation-outward expression of what happened on the inside.
- When a person believes something, he really wants to share it. It’s too good to keep a secret!
- The unpardonable sin is not the same as rejecting the gospel. Many people worry they may have committed this sin. Even IF this sin could be committed today, the fact that a person is concerned is EVIDENCE he is not guilty of this!
- Verses go on to talk about Good and bad fruit.

➤ **Matthew 12:36**

- People will give account for every idle word they utter. Because the words people have spoken are an accurate gauge of their lives.
 - By your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.
 - In the case of believers, the penalty of careless speech has been paid for through the death of Jesus on the cross.
- However.... Our careless speech, unconfessed and unforgiven will RESULT in loss of rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Lesson #4 Scripture Review Questions

All Questions from James 3:1-13

1. Who receives a stricter judgment?
2. What do we stumble in?
3. What is put in a horse's mouth to make them obey?
4. Ships are driven by fierce winds, and are controlled by what?
5. The tongue is a _____ member and _____ of great things.
6. The tongue is a _____ of iniquity and _____ the whole body.
7. _____ kind of animal and beast can be _____.
8. No _____ can _____ the tongue.
9. The tongue is an _____ poison.
10. With our tongue we _____ God and _____ men.
11. Out of the same _____ proceeds _____ and _____.
12. These things _____ _____ be so.
13. Does a _____ send forth _____ water and _____ from the same spring?
14. No _____ yields both _____ water and _____.
15. Who is _____ and _____ among you?
- 16.