

“The Devil’s Playground”

James 3:2-12

I. The Book of James

- A. A _____ book of Christian living
- B. It contains only 108 verses, but there are over ____ imperatives in those verses
- C. James is encouraging his hearers to be doers... to take _____... to get up and do something...
- D. Salvation is through faith alone, by grace alone, in _____ alone.
 1. Works are not the basis of our faith, but the _____ of our faith. Faith without works is not real faith. Real faith will result in works.

II. Controlling the Tongue

A. The _____ of the Tongue

1. James goes from the _____ to the specific
2. A _____ man - the man Jesus
3. *“Able also to bridle his whole body”*
4. Sinning with the tongue... It’s _____ just cussing or taking the Lord’s name in vain.

B. The _____ of the Tongue

1. We are slaves to our tongues. A slave has no _____. And we have no control over our tongues
2. Two illustrations, which both have the same point- Something that is smaller _____ that which is larger.
 - a. The _____ in a horse’s mouth
 - b. The rudder on a _____
3. There is only _____ man who could control his tongue. Jesus Christ

C. The _____ Nature of the Tongue

1. Great disasters come from the abuse/neglect of such a small thing...and just like fires, they can spread so rapidly and cause such damage, that it is almost _____
2. The tongue.....
 - a. Is a _____ - it not only blackens, but devours and destroys
 - b. A world of evil- the tongue is _____ of **all** kinds of sin
 - c. It _____ the whole person- it affects the whole person with sin and guilt and taints every part of the body, it leaves the mark of its own defilement everywhere (Motyer, P. 122)
 - d. Setting on fire- What starts with our speech usually winds up taking over our _____...a fire sets other things on fire
 - e. The whole course of life- meaning the natural course or the wheel of human life. There is no age, action, state or part of our body that can escape its’ influence. It’s has a _____ to its’ nature
 - f. It is set on _____ by Hell

D. The _____ of Your Tongue

1. James is pointing out that tongues are inconsistent, and go against nature

- a. The same tongue blesses and _____. These same inconsistencies can be applied to other parts of our bodies as well
2. Let me suggest to you that the tongue is a mere _____ of the problem. Here's the problem...
 - a. Matt 15:18 *"But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person."*
 - b. The tongue reveals what is in the _____... these inconsistencies of our mouth reflect the inconsistencies of our hearts

III. Closing Thoughts

A. Perhaps James is giving us an opportunity to reflect on the condition of our heart?

James speaks of the _____ of what a true Christian looks like:

1. **James 1:27** *"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."*
2. **James 2:26** *"For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."*
3. **James 4:4** *"You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."*

Is your heart divided? Is it given over completely to Christ? One of the keys to controlling the tongue is _____ your hearts to God and God alone.

- B. Perhaps James wants to expose the magnitude of God's _____ that is given to us to tame the tongue?
- C. Perhaps James wants to _____ us to live our calling to reflect Christ, as we were created in the image of God?
 1. Proverbs 15:4, "A gentle tongue is a tree of life..."
 2. We are called to reflect God in our speech

John Piper points out that the young Jonathan Edwards penned a number of his Resolutions around this theme. They are worth noting:

1. Resolved, _____ to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by, the test of this Resolution.
2. Resolved, In narrations _____ to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.
3. Resolved, _____ to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call to it.
4. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak. (Cited from Sereno E. Dwight's *Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, 1834* [reprinted by Banner of Truth, 1974], 1:xxi-xxii)

May these be _____ resolutions as well.