

Taming the Tongue

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” --No one, Ever.

No matter how we spin it, our words--and others' words--can have tremendous impact on our peace of mind, on our relationships, and on our souls. So why aren't we more careful? Why do we speak without thinking, and why do we keep silent when we can do great good? A shovel can be a valuable tool or a murder weapon; it's all in how we wield it.

Answer the questions with your thoughts. Don't worry about making the answers what you think the teacher wants to hear. Base your answer on your understanding of what God's word says. Please share your answers freely with the class. We're all in this together, and James has already told us that we are fighting something really, really powerful, so no one is expecting perfection. We're here to help each other.

1. James says that “no human being can tame the tongue,” so should we just give up trying? How do we approach something where we are so prone to failure?

2. What are some positive and negative uses of the tongue in these aspects of life?
 - a. Trials and temptations

 - b. Prayer

 - c. Interacting with those of other social or economic levels (higher or lower)

 - d. Situations that make us angry

 - e. Helping someone who is in need

 - f. Showing our faith by our works

 - g. Suffering in our lives (illness or injury, financial setbacks, betrayals, etc.)

 - h. When you win or succeed

- i. Someone's confiding to you about a secret personal struggle with temptation
 - j. Approaching someone about sin in his or her life
3. Read Matthew 12:33-37 and give some serious thought to what it says. What does it mean for us?
4. Do the same with James 1:26.
5. Do your thoughts on these verses change at all when you think about social media?

Conclusion: Taming the tongue is one of the greatest challenges in a Christian's life. Gossip, unkind words, unclean talk, and other misuses of the tongue can happen so easily in the right circumstances. Failure to speak up to rebuke or encourage is also a problem we've all had at times. Satan will be just as pleased to win us in this way as any other. We must study and pray and be alert, as Peter warned: Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls

around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8 NASB