



James is an intensely practical letter. In this section, he takes aim at an area in which many of us fall short—the use of our tongues. The human capacity to communicate reflects our God-likeness. It is a remarkable ability. Unfortunately, too often we don't use this ability for its God-designed purpose—to offer encouragement, support, love, and protection. As these verses make clear, the way in which we use our tongue says a great deal about our spiritual maturity, for the simple reason that our tongues ultimately reflect the condition of our heart.

1. Share a time when someone recently spoke words that really brought life to you. Why were these words so life-bringing?

Read James 3:1-12

2. In one word, what is your immediate response to this passage? Which of these 12 verses stands out the most to you? Why?
3. Can you remember the three ways in which the speaker (Doug Meye) summarized what these verses say about the tongue in verses 3-11? What do you want to modify or add to this summary? Can you think of how you have seen the things James has to say about the tongue play out before your own eyes?
4. The Bible has a lot to say about how we use our tongues. Read the following verses to compile a beginning list.
 - Matthew 5:22
 - Exodus 20:7
 - Proverbs 10:19, 15:4, 15:28, 17:9
 - Ephesians 4:25-29, 5:18-20
 - Colossians 4:6
 - 1 Peter 3:10
 - Are there other verses that come to your mind?

Reflecting on these verses, and your own experience, make a list of the many ways in which the tongue can be misused. What is the biggest problem for you personally? Now think of all the ways in which your tongue can be rightly used. In what areas would you like to grow the most?

5. **Read Matthew 12:33-37.** What different things does Jesus have to say about our tongues in this passage? In verse 34, Jesus links our tongues to our hearts. Taming our tongues begins with a transformation of our hearts. What practical steps can you take to let Jesus transform your heart.

Before you leave, spend some time praying together. Take some time confessing sinful ways in which you use your tongue. Identify areas where you want the help of the Holy Spirit to speak in ways which honor God and strengthen others. Spend some time thanking God for his help.