

TAMING THE TONGUE

LESSON SCRIPTURE: JAMES 3:1-12

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JAMES 3:1-12

Key Verse: *From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. James 3:10*

James 3:1-12 (NRSV)

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

2 For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle.

3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies.

4 Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!

6 And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it

stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species,

8 but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.

10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.

11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water?

12 Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

WORD POWER!!!

- **Perfect** – When a person is able to say and do what God desires, without making careless mistakes.
- **Tame** – Rule and control.
- **Teachers** – Religious scholars who help other people learn about their shared faith.
- **Bridle** – Something that's used to tame, guide, and control creatures

GETTING READY!!!

Armand had an important decision to make. He needed to decide whether or not he could still look up to Eric. When Armand first joined the church, Eric was the one who reached out to him. Eric got him to join the mime ministry. Eric talked to him about prayer and how it wasn't just for grown-ups and girls.

Then Armand overheard Eric saying something mean about a new family in the neighborhood. The family stood out because they dressed different. They also spoke with a different accent.

Armand was very confused by what Eric had done. He remembered how Eric told him to love others like he loved himself. That's why Armand couldn't just ignore the mean words Eric said about the new family that moved into the neighborhood.

What do you think Armand should do?

INTO GOD'S WORD!!!

James offers us an important warning in today's lesson. He says that our words matter. When we're paying attention to what we say and how we say it, we can act like a bridle and help people make better choices. If we don't control our tongues, we risk letting Satan control it. When that happens, we do things that make us appear like we aren't followers of Jesus Christ.

What Eric does in the **Getting Ready!!!** section is a good example. He honors God with the same mouth with which he disrespects a child of God. What is so bad about that, you ask? It makes Armand think that Eric is no longer acting like a follower of Jesus Christ. It also makes Armand rethink following the wise and godly advice that Eric gave him in the past.

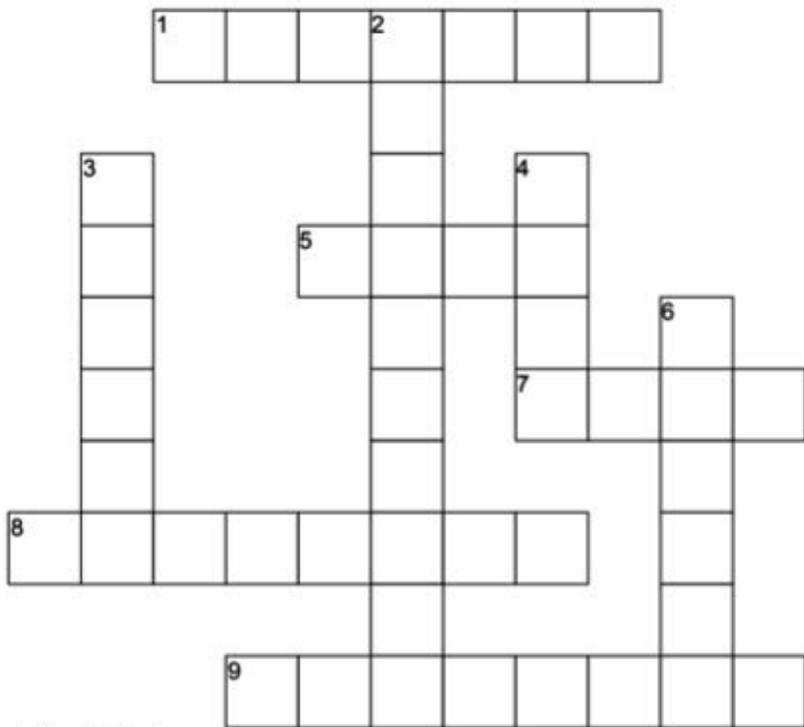
Activity #1 – The Stakes Are too High Not to Try. Solve the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

- 1 This and blessing come from the same mouth
- 5 The tongue is described as this thing that burns
- 7 A title used for the one we bless with our mouth
- 8 What many believers shouldn't become
- 9 Everyone makes these

DOWN

- 2 People who teach are judged with more of this
- 3 This “member” boasts great exploits
- 4 This sets an untamed tongue on fire
- 6 What perfect people use to keep the whole body in check



www.CrosswordWeaver.com

USING GOD’S WORD!!!

It’s not easy to tame something that’s used to being free. In the movie, *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*, the main character

is a horse named Spirit. He's running free and creating trouble for the other wild horses when he's captured by U.S. soldiers. The soldiers try to tame him by force. It seems like they're succeeding for a while, but then Spirit breaks free with a Lakota brave named Little Creek. Of course, the two escapees cause a lot of damage on their way out of the military fort. This is because Spirit is still operating in an uncontrolled way.



Spirit meets a mare named Rain who helps him tame himself after he and Little Creek get to the Lakota village. Rain shows Spirit how he can work with others. She also gives him a reason to want to be more controlled. Because of the training she provides, Spirit learns that he can make things better for others now that he's under control.

The same thing will happen to us if we take the time to control how we speak to others. We'll discover that our speech can help people choose to give God a chance when we speak with care. Then we can help them make wise and godly choices.

Activity #2 – To Tame My Tongue. If the things on the next page could help you control your tongue better, check the 🙌 box. If the things below won't help you control your tongue better, check the 🙄 box.

		
1. Taking a deep breath and saying a quick prayer before you respond to something that’s annoying you.		
2. Sharing what you’d like to say with a friend who can tell you how it sounds before you say it.		
3. Telling yourself people should get over it when they tell you that your tone of voice is hurtful when you’re annoyed.		
4. Following the rules on how to talk to people that are posted in the classroom.		
5. A friend encourages you to share a mean rumor about a classmate in your group chat.		
6. Thinking about how you’d like someone to speak to you when you’ve made a mistake before you talk to someone who’s made a mistake.		

REMIX!!!

This week’s lesson reminds us that we need to be careful how we speak. Human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. One of the first things God did was to create things, by speaking things into existence. God has also given us this power. Our words can help someone choose to get to know

God. They can also drive people away from God! That's why we can't afford to be careless with our words.

The right words can brighten someone's day. The wrong words can turn a good day into a bad one. The right words can let someone know that God wants to help them. The wrong words can make someone think God isn't interested in them. So, please pay close attention to what you say and how you say it. If you do, you'll be able to tame your tongue more and more!

PRAISE THE LORD!!!

Sticks and stones may break my bones
But broken bones will heal.
The mean and hurtful things people say
Will harm my soul in a much deeper way.

So, child of God,
Let Jesus guide the words you say
So that no one is driven away from the community of faith.