

### “Speech”

*James 3:1-12*

#### Introduction

In 1986 the space shuttle Challenger blew up. It blew up because some little rubber components were not correctly placed. They were loose. As a result of something so little - the loose rings – major damage resulted – lives were lost and destroyed. Reflecting on this, how much damage has something we consider small – like our tongue - done in our lives? How much destruction has happened because of what you or someone else has said?

The tongue is a powerful thing. Scripture warns about how we use it because it is a great revealer and director. How we direct our speech is a glaring sign of how mature we are in our spiritual growth. Our tongue reveals which way we are going and the level of our spiritual priorities. If we are not mindful of our speech, it can cause reprehensible damage; especially toxic speech which can defile a person and bring about massive damage.

Matthew 15:19 reminds us that *“the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness and slanders.”* When our hearts are unrighteous, we will respond in an unrighteous manner. Words that do not edify can contradict what God’s Word says about the image of God’s creation because it can strip away the dignity of God’s people. Words from the tongue that tear down also rip away the benefit God’s Word provides about creation and the order for which He has created all things.

Never forget that your tongue is small but has the power to build up and tear down. The tongue may be small but the speech that comes from it is an immensely powerful thing. As the word tells us, be sure to *“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”* (Col. 4:6)

#### Getting Started

1. The human tongue is multifaceted in its function. Various parts of it allow us to taste sweet, salty, sour and spicy. Which type of taste do you enjoy the most?
2. It can be difficult to swallow foods that don’t taste good. Likewise, it can be difficult to receive God’s truth when it contradicts what our flesh desires. How do you digest God’s word when you know it is good for you even though it may be hard to swallow?

## Let's Get Personal

1. How would you assess the use of your tongue? How has it revealed your character?
2. Has the use of your tongue ever brought about massive damage? How did you rectify the situation?
3. Has the use of your tongue ever brought about major healing? What have you learned about speaking truth in a loving way? How have you learned to help someone “taste” something that they need to ingest?
4. Based on your conversation, what do you believe is flowing out of your heart?

## Take the Next Step

1. This week, in what ways can you take more notice of your speech and whether it reflects God or the enemy?
2. This week, how can the use of your tongue draw other people to Christ? How can you glorify Him in your speech?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: 1 Peter 1:6-9; Hebrews 10:35-39; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; Isaiah 43:1-2; John 16:33; Romans 12:12; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 5:3-5; 2 Corinthians 11:3,13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9; Psalm 50:15; Genesis 39:6-18; Matthew 4:1-11, 6:13, 26:41; Luke 8:13; 1 Corinthians 7:5; Genesis 3:1-6; 1 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Psalm 139:23-24; 1 John 3:16-18; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 7:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 5:11-14; John 8:31-32; Luke 8:4-15; Galatians 2:11-20, 3:28-29; John 4:1-42; Numbers 12:1-16; Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Corinthians 1:26; Romans 12:16; Malachi 2:9; Acts 10:34; Deuteronomy 24:19; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Romans 10:12; Mathew 23:1-12; Acts 6:1-6; Romans 14:1-12; Romans 4:1-5; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 4:17-20; Romans 5:8-10; Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7; John 19:30; Genesis 22:1-19; Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25; Mark 11:20-26; Matthew 12:31-37; Matthew 15:16-20; Psalm 16:23; Psalm 19:14; Proverbs 18:20-21; Psalm 15:4; Psalm 12:18; Proverbs 13:3; Colossians 4:6; Psalm 141:3; Proverbs 15:14 or 18:14; Ephesians 4:29-30; Ephesians 5:4; Psalm 109:17-18.

## Renew Your Mind

*“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.”*

*Psalm 19:14*

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