

The Tongue

Read James 3:1-12. This section deals with the tongue and its power for good and evil. The important thing to notice is that in verse 6, James says that the tongue “*defiles the whole body*.” In order to understand more fully what he means, please read what Jesus said in *Matthew 15:17-20*. For it is the condition of the heart that creates that which comes out of the mouth. It is in wisdom that David cried out to the LORD in *Psalms 141:3* “**Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.**” And to link it to what Jesus said in that the condition of the heart moves the mouth, David adds in verse 4, “**Do not incline my HEART to any evil thing.**”

With this background, now answer the following questions from James, Chapter 3.

The word “perfect” in verse 2 means to be “complete” or “mature,” not perfect without defect.

Knowing that, what characteristic does James use to describe the mature Christian?

What do you think James is trying to express in verse 5?

Do you find it difficult to control your tongue? If so why?

Understanding that the tongue gives an indication of the condition of our hearts, what do you think James is describing in verses 9 and 10?

That which James describes in verses 11 and 12 are unnatural conditions. What speech is unnatural for a Christian with a “new” heart?

READ Ephesians 4:29-32. Then write in no more than 2 sentences, what you think Paul is emphasizing relative to communication.

Our tongue can create more problems than would ever be expected from what James calls it “*a little member*” (James 3:5). It has been used to destroy people’s characters, careers, families and friends. It is even used to curse and blaspheme the God that

has given life and breath to those who abuse it so. But, as the Bible indicates, (**Matthew 12:34, 15:11, 18**), the tongues gives the condition of the attitudes and sin that dwell within the heart. Communication is vital to any good relationship. But, in order for good communication to occur, the language spoken by each party needs to be courteous and easy to hear.

Match the categories on the right with the verses on the left. Choose the category that best describes each verse or group of verses and place that letter on the selection line. All the verses listed are found in the book of Proverbs.

(There are a few on the right that can be used more than once.)

<u>VERSE LIST</u>	<u>SELECTION</u>	<u>CATEGORY OF CHOICES</u>
1. 15:26	_____	A. Contrasting lies with truth
2. 10:14	_____	
3. 10:31	_____	B. Sin resulting from too much talking
4. 10:18	_____	
16:27-30.	_____	C. Lips of the wicked and their result
5. 16:21,23.	_____	
25:11,12.	_____	D. Guarding the mouth from trouble
6. 13:3	_____	
21:23	_____	E. Sin from idle chatter or gossip
30:8	_____	
7. 10:11,13,20,	_____	F. The sweetness of the lips with wisdom
21,31,32.	_____	
12:5,6,13,	_____	G. The pleasant words of the pure
14,19,22.	_____	
13:2,5.	_____	H. Bearing false witness or lying
8. 17:4	_____	
29:12	_____	I. Paying attention to lies
9. 19:5,9.	_____	
25:18	_____	J. Destroying friendships by sinful words
10. 16:28	_____	
17:9	_____	
11. 11:13	_____	
14:23	_____	
30:10	_____	
12. 10:19	_____	
13. 18:7	_____	
14. 26:23-28.	_____	