

TO LIVE IS CHRIST**Taming the Tongue****James 3:1–12**

With the tongue we praise our Lord...and with it we curse men...made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. James. 3:9–10

Days 1 and 2: Read James 3:1–2.

1. This week, in conjunction with studying James 3, do the following “tongue” exercise: for the whole week do not gossip, do not criticize another person, do not complain, do not defend yourself or make excuses, do not boast about anything. At the end of this lesson you’ll have a chance to evaluate how you do with this exercise.
2. With his words “faith without deeds is dead” (2:26b) still ringing in our ears, James warns that not many of us should presume to be teachers. Read James 1:22, 26 with 3:1. How do these earlier verses give force to the warning in 3:1? (Peek ahead to Jas. 3:13.)
3. Why will the teacher be judged more strictly than others? (Lk. 12:42–48; 2 Tim. 2:14–18)
4. What do you think are some of the problems and temptations that come with the responsibility of teaching in a church community? (See Matt. 23:5–7; Phil. 1:15–17)
5. Where do you have trouble “practicing what you preach”? What is James’ message to you?

Days 3 and 4: Read James 3:3–12.

6. What is the main point of this passage?
7. In these verses there are several examples of small things overpowering large things. List them.

8. Look again at verses 5–6. To what does James compare the tongue? What does this reveal about the tongue?

9. Look at several of the following verses and list some characteristics of an untamed tongue. (Prov. 11:9, 13; 12:5–6, 18–19; 13:3; 16:27–28; 18:2; 25:18; Eph. 5:4; Phil. 2:14)

10. In your own experience do James’ words about the tongue ring true? What trouble has your own untamed tongue gotten you into?

Day 5: Read James 3:3–12.

11. Recall the tongue exercise from Day 1. Share what God has been teaching you this week about your own inability to control your tongue.

12. From verse 8 it seems that there is no use even trying to tame our tongues. What gives us hope? Read the following verses and jot down the main idea of each.

1 Cor. 3:16 _____

2 Cor. 5:17 _____

Gal. 2:20 _____

13. What do these verses have to do with James 3:11–12? (See also Matt. 12:34b: “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”)

14. What criteria does the Lord give us in Ephesians 4:29 for the way we use our tongue?

15. If Christ lives in us we have a choice about how to use our tongues. What does faith have to do with taming our tongues? By whose power do we do good works? (For help review Lesson 19; see also Jn. 15:4–5 and Gal. 5:22–23.)