

James 3:1-12 New Living Translation

Controlling the Tongue

1 Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. **2** Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. **4** And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. **5** In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. **6** And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, **8** but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. **9** Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. **10** And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!

11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? **12** Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

James 4:11-12 New Living Translation

Warning against Judging Others

11 Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. [a] If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. **12** God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

James 5:12 New Living Translation

12 But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and be condemned.

Questions:

1. Explain how hard it is to control your tongue.
Share a victory or challenge in controlling your tongue.
2. Describe what damage your words can have on others.
3. Why do you think it is so hard to tame your tongue?
4. We praise God and say not so good things about others. Explain what is wrong with this picture.
5. Why should you not criticize or judge others?

Are there times when a Christian can try to correct other Christians? Explain

How is this different from judging them?