

One Step to Freedom  
Chapter 3: Trials and Temptations

Lesson 4  
Taming the Tongue and Envy

*“But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison”  
(James 3:8-9).*

**Read James 3:1-12.** James discusses the tongue, and warns against the trouble it can cause. First of all, those who teach must guard their tongues, because with one word they could misrepresent God and stumble others. Then James applies the warning to all generally—pointing out how dangerous the tongue is, how hard it is to control, and how mature a person is who can bridle their tongue.

1. Why should someone be sure they are called to teach God’s Word?

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2. Who stumbles in many things?

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3. What is the man or woman who controls their tongue?

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4. Starting in verse 3, James draws for us three illustrations that show us how much our tongue (words) affects our whole being. What are these three illustrations?

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5. According to verse 5, what is the tongue and what does it do?

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6. In verse 6, what two things is the tongue compared to?

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7. James 3:10 states our words can bless or curse—edify and encourage others or quench and discourage. How do you think you can improve in this area?

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8. According to James 3:9, what two things do we do with our tongue?

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9. In verses 11 and 12, James again uses illustrations to impress his point upon us. List the three illustrations and their purpose.

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The key point in this passage of James' letter is to emphasize that our profession of faith must carry over into our words. Remember, James is seeking to show that faith without works is dead; and so, in these verses "the works" relate to our words.

10. Read James 3:13-18. God gives His people wisdom and not envy and strife. What do envy and self-seeking lead to?

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11. What is this kind of "wisdom"?

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Three things work together to pull us away from God and His service: the world, the flesh and the Devil. This corresponds to earthly, sensual and demonic things.

12. According to James 3:17, what are the attributes of godly wisdom?

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13. What is the end result of righteousness working in our lives?

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We need to ask God for His help in taming the tongue and suppressing our self-seeking nature. If we mind our tongue and sanctify our hearts unto God, we will glorify God with righteous good works, bringing peace to those around us.

Further reading: Read James chapter 4.