

**Lesson 80**

**TEXT** James 3:1-18

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES** Job 6:25; Psalms 52:2-4; 59:12; Proverbs 6:17; 12:17; Isaiah 32:6; 1 Peter 3:10

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to cite a number of reasons why the tongue is important in serving God, knowing that it is the outlet of the heart.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. — Matthew 12:34

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. — Proverbs 13:3

**ANSWER  
TITLE:** **The Troublemaker**  
**SEARCH  
TITLE:** **Tongue**

**Reference Information**

In Scripture, the word *tongue* has a number of meanings. They are:

- 1. An organ of the body, used by Gideon’s men in drinking water (Judges 7:5), and also by Jesus when He “touched his tongue” in healing the one with an impediment of speech (Mark 7:32,33).
- 2. An organ of speech of the one healed by Jesus (Mark 7:35), and praise (Psalm 35:28).

- 3. A language or dialect (Genesis 10:5; 11:7).

The figurative uses of the word are interesting. The tongue can be sharpened; i.e., made to utter caustic words (Psalms 64:3; 140:3). It is a sharp sword (Psalm 57:4). The tongue of the just is a treasure (Proverbs 10:20), of the wise—health (Proverbs 12:18), and a mark of wisdom (Isaiah 50:4). It is also a shrewd antagonist (Psalm 52:2).

**YOUR OPENER**

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## RESPONSES

1. Our text mentions a horse's bit, a ship's helm, the tongue, and fire. Discuss with your students the size of the items mentioned in comparison to the effects they produce. Ask the students why the tongue would be included in this list.

2. Help your students talk about the destruction caused by a spark, as compared with the destruction caused by an unruly tongue. It can be noted that wars have been started by what a man said. See 1 Kings 20:11,12. On the other hand, wars have been averted by the right words. The tongue is a little member, but it is capable of doing tremendous things.

3. The communication that is not corrupt but edifying, and conversation that makes known the Gospel of Jesus Christ bring the blessing of God. The communication that grieves the Holy Spirit, that expresses bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, or evil, will result in God's displeasure and judgment. How can we be sure of always saying the right things? It surely takes the grace of God, but He that saved us and gave us a new heart also helps us to speak uprightly. Use these verses as a tool of self-evaluation. Help the students realize that people will judge what is in the heart by what they hear being said.

The importance of having a heart right with God is also stressed in this lesson on the tongue. James explains the spiritual danger of not controlling the words that proceed from the mouth. It has been said: "There is nothing in all the world so good or so bad as the tongue. It can bless or curse, bring joy or wring the heart with sorrow; it can bring peace or war; it can lead to virtue or seduce to vice; it can speak the truth or utter lies; it can be harsh or mild, rough or smooth, refined or vulgar, pure or impure. It is with the tongue we bless God or curse man." (S. L. Flowers: The Serpent's Fang)

1. What things that are small in size, and possibly seem insignificant, are mentioned in our lesson as being of very great importance? Consider the power they exert.

2. Think on how a large forest fire can be started by a very small spark. How does the Bible compare this to the tongue?

3. What types of communication will bring the blessing of God, and what kinds will grieve the Spirit of God? See Ephesians 4:29-31; 5:19,20.

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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4. Using Ephesians 4:29 and 5:19,20 for guidance, explain the feeling one experiences when speaking things which edify and encourage others.

5. What does the lesson teach us about a wise man's conduct and conversation? Ask yourself: Does my conversation qualify me as being wise?

6. What do these Scriptures teach us to do about controlling our tongue? See Psalms 15:1-4; 34:13; Proverbs 21:23; James 1:26.

7. Explain how the motives of the heart and the use of the tongue are related.

8. What is God's attitude toward the person whose tongue utters those things which proceed from a righteous heart and mind (Malachi 3:16,17)? Give some specific examples of ways the tongue can be consecrated to God's use.

4. Your students will realize that speaking things which encourage and edify others will bring a like feeling into their own spirit. To a Christian, it is more than the obvious necessity of avoiding evil speech; he must also beware of foolish or unnecessary talking.

5. James 3:13 tells us that a wise man proves his wisdom by his good conversation. Help the students realize that this is a good measuring tool. Ask your students to spend a few moments thinking about conversations they overheard or had a part in yesterday. Could they relate any part of what they heard or said to this verse?

6. Ask for volunteers to look up and read the verses aloud, and explain in their own words what the verses mean.

7. Allow time for students to offer their explanations. The discussions should bring out that if their hearts are right, their motives will be right, and their speech will reflect this.

8. He listens and takes permanent note, and claims them as His own. As your students cite examples of how they can consecrate their tongue to be used for God, some possibilities might include witnessing to unbelievers and encouraging a brother.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What does worldly wisdom, in verse 15, mean?

How would you contrast worldly wisdom with verse 17?

With what did Mike, in our ANSWER story, say the Bible compares the tongue?

The last part of our ANSWER story shows that a change took place in Tom. What do you suppose brought it about?

God also says the tongue is full of deadly poison. Give an example of poison. What effect does it have? What forms of poison can your tongue create?

Why is it important for a Christian to guard his speech? Is it important for others too? Why?

What effect does our speech have on others? At home? At school? At work?

Why is the tongue call a fire (verse 6)?

Did you ever know of friends who separated because someone talked unwisely? How could that situation have been changed?

Last week's lesson taught us the origin of the words we speak. What is it?

## THINGS TO DO

Bring a can of anything (fruit, olives, etc.) or a bottle of hand lotion, perfume, etc. Show to your class. Ask them what they think is inside the can or bottle. Discuss the similarities of the labeled can or bottle to human beings. We, as people, in word (tongue) and action label ourselves, or reveal to others what kind of person we are.

Take an empty container to class and have the students fill it with items (beans, blocks, toys, wood, etc.). After the container if filled, ask students to take something out that is not in the box. (Only what is put in can come out.)

Take a calculator to class. Put an easy problem into it. Ask why you received that answer. This should again illustrate that what we put in (the numbers put into the calculator) determines what comes out (the numerical total).

Make a pocket heart. Label paper strips with phrases, deeds, etc., that would accompany any unregenerated heart (examples: lying, swearing, saying God's name in vain, cheating, or being selfish, rude, boastful, conceited). Place inside heart. Have each student pull out

one labeled strip. Discuss how the tongue projects our heart's evil.

Make another pocket heart. Label paper strips with phrases, deeds, etc., that a saved person would demonstrate (examples: kindness, love, unselfishness, clean words, sharing, preferring others, thankfulness, happiness). Place inside heart. Each students pulls out one labeled strip. Discuss the changes God makes in a heart when He makes all things new. See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Bring or draw a picture of a bee with a prominent stinger. Talk about the poison in the stinger and that people who are allergic can even die of bee stings if they don't receive an antidote. And even if they are not allergic, it hurts! Then go to James 3:8. Close with Proverbs 16:24, bringing out that the tongue can make honey or sweet words good for our own spiritual health and that of others.

Bring a bridle and bit. Tape Scriptures on it to illustrate students' use of Scripture to bridle the tongue and keep their progress toward Heaven: Job 6:25; Psalm 34:13; Proverbs 13:3; Proverbs 16:24; Proverbs 21:23; Proverbs 25:11; Titus 3:2; James 1:26; 1 Peter 3:10.

## Answers for ANSWER

### What Did He Say?

It is impossible to speak English without vowels. Add the missing vowels to the words in this verse and read what Solomon, the author of Proverbs, had to say about good words.

A - ☆  
 E - □  
 I - x  
 O - ?  
 U - ♥

P l e a s a n t   w o r d s   a r e   a s   a n  
 h o n e y c o m b ,   s w e e t   t o   t h e  
 s o u l ,   a n d   h e a l t h   t o   t h e  
 b o n e s .

P r o v e r b s   1 6 : 2 4

