

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes

Sermon Notes for August 8, 1999

Dale Whitehead

"Taming the Tongue"

James 3:1-12

Five reasons why we need to control our tongue.

The tongue's potential to bring judgment (Matthew 12:36, James 3:1).

The tongue's potential to effect the course of our lives (James 3:2).

The word "stumble" (PTAIO), as in James 2:10, denotes a moral lapse. In its literal sense the term conveys the picture of the foot striking against some obstacle so as to cause the individual to trip or stumble; metaphorically it denotes the fact of a failure in duty, a mistake that is blameworthy, or a sin.

As we consider the question of what might constitute a moral lapse in respect to our speech we must appreciate the fact this would include not only sins of commission but also sins of omission.

James uses the word "perfect" (TELIOS) not to describe a morally flawless man but rather a man with a purified and mature heart." (James 1:4, 3:10).

In this context "body" seems to refer to the person in general, to his whole being. In other words, if we can control our tongues we can control the entire course of our lives.

James uses two analogies to show the power of the tongue to control.

The bridle (V. 3)

The rudder (V. 4)

We cannot change the way we speak until the Lord Himself changes us. Therefore, before we can bring our tongue under control in any area we must give our lives up to the Lord in all areas (John 15:4-5).

What has the Lord called us to do with our tongues directly which is directly tied to our devotion to Him?

We are called to come before Him in praise and thanksgiving (Psalms 95:1-4).

We are called to share our testimony with the righteous (Psalms. 22:22).

We are called to reveal the Lord to the nations (Psalms 57:9-11).