



CAYA Series – 52 Stories of the Bible

THE TONGUE

James tells us that there is nothing more difficult to control than the tongue. It destroys people's reputation, often under the guise that what is being said is accurate. We are hurt, so we verbally lash out. We want to be well thought of, so we feign piety. The only way to gain any victory over the tongue is to work on the heart, since it is out of the heart that the mouth speaks. Unfortunately, gossip often is the natural language of the church, but there can be victory.

[<https://www.biblicaltraining.org/james/major-stories-bible>]

LEARNERS WILL:

- Learn how difficult the tongue is to control
- Identify damage caused by misuse of the tongue
- See how words reflect your character
- Discover that a change of heart is the only thing that reflects what you say.

THE TONGUE

Scripture Reference: Book of James

History: Written by James, the brother of Jesus who became head of the Jerusalem Church in Acts 15.

Theology: Similar to that of Paul, with a twist.

- Paul: Justification (being right with God): based on faith, not works. Nothing you do/earn.
- James: Justification: moves a person toward holiness or works, not just faith alone.

James 2:24 - person justified by faith alone is dead. Dead faith is worse than no faith.

Faith must: work, produce, and be visible.

- > Verbal faith is not enough.
- > Mental faith is insufficient: not enough, inadequate.
- > Faith must inspire action.
- > Faith must manifest itself in its works of faith.

READ: James 2:21-24 The Message (MSG)

James 2:17 King James Version (KJV)

Both agree you don't earn salvation by works. But justification shows itself in work, in growth toward holiness.

The person that says they have faith or believes in God but has no work, according to the Greek: that kind of faith can't save him. James 2:14, 26

What we *say* versus what we *do*:

We make great claims about our faith but are often guilty of defying them with our actions. We profess trust in God and to be his people, but cling to the world and its values.

Note: We have the right answers (know what to say, the Godly thing) but contradict the truth with our lives. James confronts this conflict head on. **It's not enough to talk, we must live it.**

1. The proof of the reality of our faith, is a changed life.
2. Genuine faith produces good deeds!

Christian: An adherent (supporter) or follower of Christ, or his disciple.
Disciples were first called Christians in Antioch, Acts 11:26 at which time Agrippa told Paul, “you almost persuade me to be a Christian”.

Works will yield fruit (John 13:35). Faith that doesn't produce Godliness is dead.

James 2:19

Notes: Even the demons believe. The author encourages a faith like Abraham: An active faith. His faith was complete by his movement toward holiness and obedience to God.

James 2:24-26: faith without works is dead.

THE TONGUE: James 3:1-12

We tend to emphasize that Faith that saves is faith alone.....all you need is faith. James teaches that Faith that saves is never alone. You don't just have faith. It is always with movement toward holiness. Because faith not followed by a movement toward holiness is useless, especially with regard to the tongue.

**There is no perfect man or woman, for we all have a tongue.

Tongue: *organ of taste and speech*

- The tongue is identified as a small bit, that is a part of the body. It's a fire, a world of unrighteousness.
- Man can tame every kind of animal and beast in the world but no one can tame the tongue?
- Figuratively: can be sharpened like a sword (Psalm 64:3) or serpent (Psalm 140:3)
- Utters caustic (bitterness) poisonous words
- Like a bow: project lies (Jeremiah 9:3)
- Arrow: be shot out, striking down with its deceit.
- Weapon for attack (Jeremiah 18:18) wounding like a sharp sword Ps 57:4
- Viciously used to flatter (Psalm 5:9; Proverbs 28:23)
- Used to sin or speak of the Lord's righteousness (Psalm 35:28)
- Sing praises to God (Psalm 126:2)
- Tongue of the wise promotes health (Proverbs 12:18)
- Tongue of the righteousness is a treasure (Proverbs 10:20)
- Keep tongue from evil (Psalm 34:13)
- Guard tongue (Proverbs 21:23)

Key: *Tongue:* Is an indicator of a person's spirit. It *reveals* the heart (Matthew 12:33-37).

READ: James 3:1-12 It warns of the consequences of an uncontrolled tongue

The Old Testament warns us about avoiding gossip and evil speaking. Leviticus 19:16; Psalm 50:16-20; Proverbs 20:19

The New Testament tells us to put away the wicked use of the tongue. Ephesians 4:31; Titus 3:1-2

AN UNCONTROLLED TONGUE IS DANGEROUS?

- Because words rashly spoken can have serious consequences.
- Because it will affect the lives of individuals for a lifetime.
- A man who has an uncontrolled tongue brings pain and hurt upon himself.
- It makes our religion useless in the sight of God.

If faith is real, it manifests itself in a movement toward holiness which affects what we say. The scripture says: faith without works is dead. Well, the work here refers to bridling the tongue.

James 1:26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So, your mouth/tongue will say what's in your heart.

How can the tongue be so powerful, crying out “Hosanna” with one breath and “crucify him” with the next?

ANSWER: James 3:4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. (NIV)

WHO IS THE PILOT?

“THE HEART”

We're warned to guard our heart (Proverbs 1:23) because what goes in, will affect what comes out.

The tongue is like the small rudder that directs the ship. However, it's controlled by the governor or pilot, which is the heart. The will of the tongue is the human heart so the tongue is controlled by what's in your heart. It says what the heart feels.

Tongue is a traitor, a snitch. No matter how hard you try to hide your feelings, it will publish what you really feel in your heart.

Roots are important:

Matthew 7:16-20 say by their fruit you will know them.

Also **READ:** Matthew 12:33-37

What people say is a reflection of their roots, what's on the inside of them. And some people feel they can say anything they want, whenever they want.

4 REASONS WHY:

1. It's the truth. But, the truth can start a destructive fire just as easily as a lie. While gossip can be true, it can still be destructive and slanderous. Just because it's true, do we want that to be the sole criteria of whether or not we should spread it publicly?
2. He/she hurt me so I have a right to say what I want.
 - All have been deeply wounded/hurt by someone. Is that a green light to slander them?
 - Ephesians 4:32: forgive as God has. Our hurt can't compare to his. Yet, he forgave us.
3. Love to feign piety (quality of being religious or relevant): we're fakes. Example: "I probably shouldn't say this...but.", I'll tell you but don't tell anyone else". Our response should be: then don't tell me. When we listen, we're just as guilty.
4. Pretend to be religious.
 - Take a topic and cloak it with religious language.
 - Let me tell you a little about this person so you know what to pray for...
 - I'm doing this in love
 - Let me share this with you

Religious cloaks are used to hide slander. Judgment!

What destroys churches?

- Not drugs
- Not governmental oppression
- Not lack of money

#1: Gossip, slander, judgmental and critical spirits that ignite fires of the heart that

ignite fires of the tongue. You hurt my feelings, I've got to hurt yours or someone else. Church hurt is real and in addition to destroying human relationships, relationships with God are now in jeopardy.

What do we have to change?

The heart. Whatever is in the heart, the tongue will seek to destroy.

- *Arrogance*: tongue puts others down to elevate self,
- *Sin*: tongue will seek to destroy.
- *Humility*: tongue puts needs of others ahead of self.
- *Forgiveness* in heart: mouth is full of tender words seasoned with grace and thanksgiving.

Legalism is wrong. It looks at James 3 and says: "just shut your mouth"

CONCLUSION:

Faith controls the tongue. That small but immensely powerful part of the body that must be held in check.

It's impossible to completely bridle the tongue, we're all bound to slip because it's impossible to completely have a pure heart. But, we can move in the right direction as we draw closer to God, and he will draw nigh to us. (James 4:8) Think on things that are holy, righteous and pure and love one another with the love of God. Showing forgiveness as he has forgiven us. As we humble ourselves before him, he will exalt us. Have a change of heart!

[Small Group Activity]

Stories of the Bible CAYA Series

1. Consider a time when you were offended by someone's words
 - a. How did it make you feel?
 - b. How did you respond?
 - c. How did you justify your actions?

2. Consider a time when you . . .
 - a. Offended someone with words
 - b. Encouraged someone with words
 - c. What was their reaction to you?

3. What steps will you take to bridle your tongue? Where does it start?