



TAMING THE TONGUE

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(Message preached @ CCA on Sunday, 19 September)

26 September 2021

Scripture references: James 3:1-12

This teaching from James 3 will attempt to:

- a. Remind us of the Power of the Tongue
- b. Give us some practical nuggets to use when we communicate (written or verbal)
- c. Remind us what the Bible says about our words.

James 3:1–12 (NIV)

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or 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. ⁵Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

1. John Maxwell says this about the quoted Scripture regarding the Tongue:

"What power the little muscle inside our mouths contain. This muscle forms words and dispenses both blessing and curse"

James 3 lists 4 functions of the tongue:

- a) To Gauge (v1-2) – The tongue is a spiritual meter. If we can bridle it we can bridle the whole body. It becomes the gauge for our maturity. – Our faith will never register higher than our words.

How do we speak? What do we say? Henry's wife's words: "I trust God that you will walk out of this hospital before I need to buy another packet of cream crackers." (To share communion). He walked out the morning after the crackers were finished!

- b) To Guide (v3-5) – The tongue is like a horse's bit, a ship's rudder or kindling wood. It starts things in motion. If we can control it, we can guide our lives.
- c) To Gird (*to bind, restrain or encircle*) (v6-8) - The tongue is powerful like a huge fire. It can ruin or bless our entire lives.
- d) To Guard (v9-18) – The tongue can reveal what sort of wisdom we can harbour inside. A good tongue protects our integrity.

2. Sending and Receiving (We think of the tongue as sending, but more often we send what we have received through various mediums, input or stimuli).

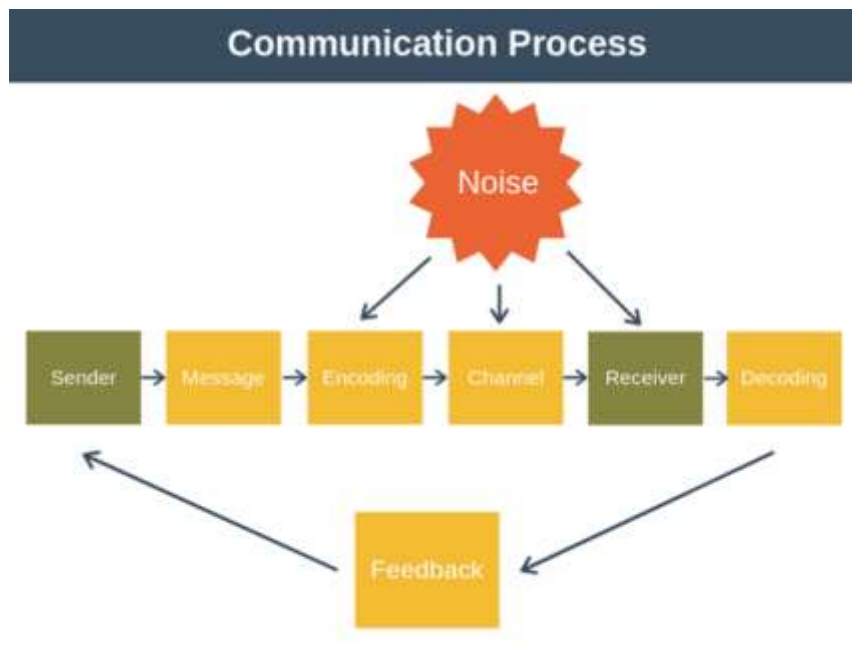
- What is there that has not already been said or preached about the tongue?
- Why are we battling with the tongue so much?
- Is it perhaps because we enjoy the sensation of being able to tell?
- Is it because we enjoy the fall and embarrassment of others?
- Is it because of envy and hatred?

3. How would James have written his book in 2021? Let's consider how we communicate today. (Our smart phones have become a "tongue")

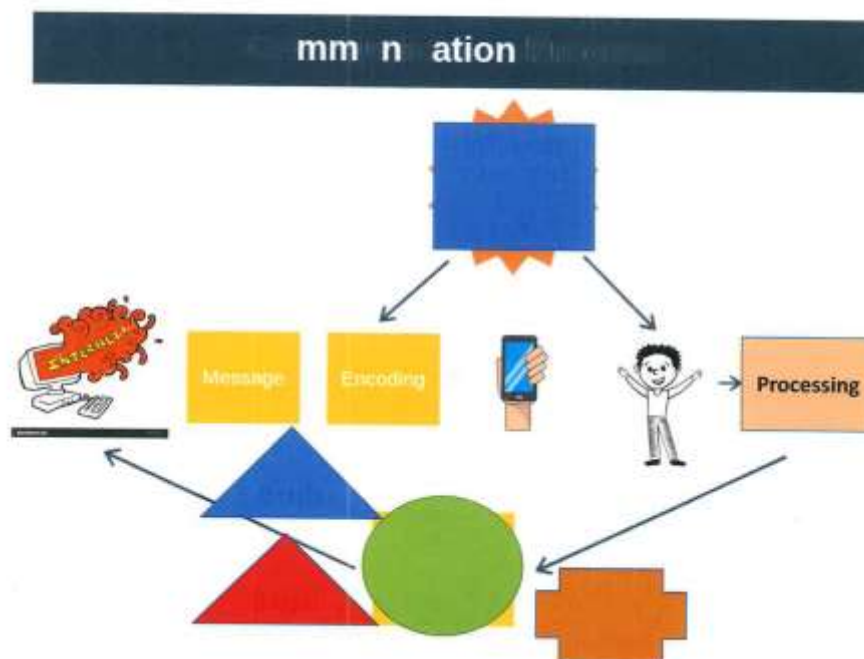
- Spoken word, written word
- Social media
- Television
- Internet
- Email
- WhatsApp
- Twitter, etc.

4. Communication Process

See diagram.



5. How the Smart cellphone became a tongue and changed the normal communication process.



6. The input we get is filtered through our own framework, which could be the following:



7. When we process information it can bring us to a point where we question our own realities, standards, ethics, beliefs, etc.

Stop questioning truths and go back to the reality base that we have a Christ who died for us, who set us free, who helps us in every situation, who has plans for us that it will go well for us. If we don't remind ourselves, we will keep comparing ourselves with this false reality that is shoved down our throats every day, via social media messages, etc.



8. We have a choice to respond either in FEAR, ACTION or REACTION and it could be in the form of Gossip or as the Gospel teaches.



What Is Gossip?

The Scriptures do not provide a definition of gossip in one location. Instead, they describe gossip in action and intimately tie it to the character of the people participating in this tantalizing sin.

The Bible often uses the word gossip to describe a kind of person more than just a pattern of communication.

A way of summarizing the Bible's teaching on this topic is to say that the sin of gossip is bearing bad news behind someone's back out of a bad heart.



What does the Gospel teach?

Jesus said that we will give an account for every careless word we have spoken (Matthew 12:36), not just for the malicious ones.

Matthew 12:36-37 TPT

"You can be sure of this: when the day of judgment comes, everyone will be held accountable for every careless word he has spoken. Your very words will be used as evidence against you, and your words will declare you either innocent or guilty."

Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."

Luke 6:45 (ESV)

"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."



Response

THINK Before you speak.

Think before you speak (or do, act, type, etc.)

T -	Is it	the	Truth
H -	Is it		Helpful
I -	Is it		Important
N -	Is it		Necessary
K -	Is it		Kind

Closing prayer

Psalms 141

¹ I call to you, LORD, come quickly to me;
hear me when I call to you.

² May my prayer be set before you like incense;
may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

³ Set a guard over my mouth, LORD;
keep watch over the door of my lips.

We need help! Call on Jesus. Speak the name of Jesus over every heart and situation. There is Hope and Freedom in Him.

APPLICATION

Consider the statement: "We have a choice to respond either in FEAR, ACTION or REACTION and it could be in the form of Gossip or as the Gospel teaches."

1. What inputs (messages) are you receiving? Are they filtered through your own framework of insecurities, envy, greed or other influences? *Remind yourself that you have a Christ who died for you, who set you free and who helps you in every situation.*
2. How do you respond to the messages you receive? Do they cause fear or some other action or reaction in us?
3. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. What are your words revealing about your heart?
4. Consider Matthew 12:36-37 and how you should use your words (T H I N K).

Assistance:

If you need prayer or assistance, please contact our pastoral care line 072 986 4368 or one of our pastors directly.

To join a community group, contact Marli (072 986 4368) or Jen (084 308 5185) or one of our community group leaders directly. Link: <http://christiancentre.co.za/community.html#groups>
