

KEY TEXT: JAMES 3:1-12

T _____ or tame?

- “A wild animal is like a loaded gun, it can go off at any time. You can usually train a wild animal, never tame a wild animal. You have to remember that. You can never tame one.” -Jack Hanna¹

James 3:7-8 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

R _____ 3 truths about the tongue.

1. Your tongue _____ where you go.

James 3:3-5a ³When we put bit 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 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.

2. Your tongue can _____ what you have and what others have.

James 3:5b-6 ⁵Consider 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 itself set on fire by hell.

3. Your tongue _____ the content of your character.

James 3:9-12 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.

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

A _____ of verses from the book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

Proverbs 12:18-19 ¹⁸The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. ¹⁹Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

Proverbs 13:3 Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

Proverbs 15:4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

Proverbs 16:24 Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 18:20-21 ²⁰From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled; with the harvest of lips they are satisfied. ²¹The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 21:23 Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

I _____ in a trio of Life Hacks!

1. The 50/50 (Ask Scripture)

Psalms 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

2. Ask the audience (Ask the church)

Proverbs 13:20 Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.

3. Phone a friend (Ask God)

- "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear – all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer!"
-Joseph Scriven²

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

N _____ what? What's your next step? What's your "final answer?"

For your reflection: How will you use these three training the tongue life hacks to develop and put into practice your own person tongue training program?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION/DISCUSSION AT HOME AND IN YOUR LIFE GROUP

1. Revisit each of the Proverbs on this outline, then work as a group to summarize or restate them in your own words.
2. Share a personal story about a time when you experienced the power of words—when your tongue directed you where you didn't want to go, destroyed like a wild fire, or displayed the overflow of your heart in a way that surprised you? What could/should you have done differently in that situation? What, if anything, did you do to try and make it right?
3. Matthew 15:18 says the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart. What do your words show you about your heart? What helps you be aware of how what you feed your heart (what you read, listen to, think about) impacts your words?
4. Walk back through the trio of Life Hacks and discuss together how they can help you better train your tongue and speak life. What's one thing will you do this week to help train your tongue? Who will you ask to help encourage and keep you accountable?
5. What was *for you* in this message? What, from this message, is God pressing upon you to *share* with someone else?

NEXT WEEK: Life Hacks: Purity

PASSAGES TO PREPARE YOUR HEART: Proverbs 2, Proverbs 6:20-35; 15:26; 16:2; 20:9-11; 22:11; James 3:17

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¹Jack Hanna, interview on *Larry King Live*, 2003 as quoted by Kari Scare, "Tongue Taming," *Struggle to Victory*, January 30, 2014.

²Joseph Scriven, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", 1885