**Title:** Help, I Can’t Control My Tongue *(James 3:1-18)*

**The Main Idea: *The power of Life and Death is in our tongue; we should be very careful how we use this little muscle.***

**Introduction: “The tongue”** is used throughout Scripture in both **literal** and **metaphorical** ways, especially in **Psalms**, Proverbs, and James. The tongue is a *“small part of the body”* (**James 3:5**), yet **Proverbs 18:21** says it *“has the power of life and death.”* This holds true whether we’re speaking of **spiritual**, **physical**, or **emotional** *“life and death.”*

The concept of **taming the tongue** is found in **James 3** where God declares, through the apostle James, that *“no one can tame the tongue”* (**James 3:8**). The lengthy discussion about the tongue in this chapter is both **convicting** and **illuminating**. Among the things this chapter reveals about the tongue: it is a **small part** of the body, but it makes great boasts (verse 5); it is **a fire** and a **world of evil** that defiles the whole person (verse 6); it is set on fire **by hell** (verse 6); and it is an unrestrainable evil and full of deadly poison (verse 7). Is it any wonder, then, that God declares that **taming the tongue** is impossible?

When **Adam** sinned, God imputed that sin to mankind, so, whether or not we want to believe it, **every human** being is born with a wicked heart and an evil sin nature ([**Romans 3:10–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.10%E2%80%9318)). Lurking within each of us are varying degrees of **hatred**, **bitterness**, **jealousy**, and **pride**, and the **tongue takes hold** of these and other **destructive tendencies** and strikes out, often with a push from Satan. We see this every day among strangers, friends, siblings, and, worst of all, among husbands and wives, the **very people** who, next to their love for the Lord Jesus, should have the **most love** for each other (Ephesians 5:22–33).

1. The **Words** of Our **Heart** *(James 3:1-6)*
2. The **Heart** of Our **Words** *(James 3:7-12)*
3. The **Help** We All **Need** *(James 3:13-18)*

**Conclusion*:*** What is to be done, then, to **tame the tongue**? If God has declared that **“no one”** can tame the tongue, how can we even begin to do so? While many people have quit smoking or drinking by the power of the human will, the problem of the **heart** and **tongue** cannot be solved by human will power. It takes the power of the **resurrected Christ** within us to control the tongue, and that power is available only to those who turn their lives over to Him (Rom.8:10–14). As with so many things in life, *“with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible”* (**Matthew 19:26**).

There is **only One** who can control the tongue. Only by **God’s Spirit** living within us can we hope to gain control over our tongues. He **convicts us** when we sin with our lips, and that conviction drives us to **repent** and **pray** for more filling of the Spirit so we can avoid further sin. As we cling to Him and yield to Him in obedience, He controls us more and more, including our tongues.