

"Are YOU Breathing Fire???"

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James 3:3-8 NIV [3] When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. [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. [5] Likewise 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. [6] The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. [7] All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, [8] but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

The tongue is compared to 3 things:

1. A horses' bit

With a bit a person can direct the horse whatever way they want it to go (assuming it's a good horse). A "light horse" (like an Arabian) has small bones and weighs less than 1300 lbs. A "heavy horse" (like a Clydesdale) can weigh up to 2000 lbs. But whether it's a small horse or a big one they are heavier and much stronger than a person. The horse could very well choose to do its own thing, but all it takes is a little piece of metal at the right place to guide a large horse whatever way you want it to go. A small girl can guide a giant animal in a different direction, simply because of a small bit. **That tiny bit is powerful, and it can direct our whole lives, much like the tongue.**

2. A ship's rudder

Have you ever seen a cruise ship or an ocean-liner??? They are huge!!! A tractor trailer looks like a matchbox car compared to a huge oil rig. The amazing thing is that something as gigantic as an ocean-liner can be steered at all. But with a rudder, very small compared to the huge ship, the ship can be guided through the water by an expert captain. A small rudder guides a huge ship. **Our little tongues may be small, but they are powerful and can point our lives in one direction or another. Whoever controls your tongue controls you. If you control it, you control you. If others control it, they control you. If the enemy controls it, he controls you. And if God controls your tongue, than He can be in control of your life.**

Example) Do you talk differently when you are around your friends at school than you do at church??? Do you say words around your friends that you would never say around your own mother? Why do you change how you talk depending on who you're around??? In a small way, they are controlling you. You want to be accepted by other teens at school so you throw in a cuss word here or there. You don't want your mom to ground you, so you watch your words around her. You don't want to cuss around me because I'm a minister, and obviously I don't want to hear it. So am I suggesting you should go around cussing all the time, and say whatever you want... not at all. I'm suggesting that you should always watch what you say, not only when your mom, or your youth pastor's around. Try to please God with the things you say. Let Him be in control of your tongue, nobody else. A small rudder can guide a huge ship.

3. A small spark that starts a blazing inferno

A tiny match, some smoldering coals of a campfire that wasn't put out right, or even a cigarette can set an entire forest ablaze!!! Something so small can cause such huge disaster. **Our tongues are little things, yet they too can do a lot of damage.**

It's just like we are BREATHING FIRE when we call someone a horrible name, or curse at somebody.

Remember that old nursery rhyme: "sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me." That's a bunch of bologna!!! I am affected by the things people say, and so are you. Words are very powerful. They can either build people up, or tear them down. Every time we open our mouths we can either be creating, or destroying.

James 3:9-12 NIV

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

Question: Why don't people drink from the ocean?

Actually if you drink enough of the salt water, it will make you very sick, dehydrate you and kill you. It makes you more thirsty, instead of quenching your thirst. Do you want be someone that dishes out ocean water to people??? Or would you rather be someone that gives out cold glasses of Sparklett's water???

I tell you what, you'll have more friends if you give out good water, just like if you pour out sweet words, instead of sickening words. People are going to want to be around you if you encourage them and build them up. No one wants to be around someone who's constantly tearing them down.

Our tongue is a very powerful force. With it we can help or hurt, we can build or tear down, we can heal or kill. The choice is up to you. How will you handle the weapon of mass destruction in

between your cheeks? Will you choose to "breath fire" at those around you, or will you encourage them instead?

Memorize:

1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Write the names of 3 people that you will see in the next couple of days. Write down at least one compliment or encouragement to say to them. Your homework: say that encouraging word to them by Sunday. Also: keep an eye on your words. Every time you say a bad word, or say something mean to somebody, realize you are "breathing fire" if possible apologize to the person you spoke it to, and ask God to help you control your tongue.

Prayer: