

Watch Your Mouth:

A Lesson on Taming the Tongue

LESSON BY LUKE REYNOLDS (FOR LADS TO LEADERS/LEADERETTES)

Introduction: Watch your mouth! Has your momma ever told you that? What about your daddy? We don't like to hear those words, but sometimes it's necessary. **James 3:7-12** tells us that the tongue is an untamed, unruly evil, that is full of deadly poison. James shows us that we have to choose our words carefully. For instance, we can lift up or tear down others with our tongue. Basically, he shows how our tongue reveals what's going on in our heart. What I would like for us to study is the spiritual cure for the tongue that we can find in the book of James.

Discussion:

I. The first thing we have to do is admit the problem.

If we look back to **James 1:26**, we find that our tongue reveals our religion.

PURE & UNDEFILED RELIGION.

He explains that our religion is useless....unless we attempt to tame our tongue.

Later in **James 5:16** he tells us to confess our faults.

Confession is a way to use our mouth for good things not evil.

Confession is like the mouthwash of the soul.

You know how after you've eaten Mexican food, eggs, or garlic, your breath stinks?

You need some mouthwash! Confession is just like that.

II. Second, we need to focus on our heart.

Jesus reminds us to do this in **Matthew 12:34** and many other times in His teachings.

Why? Because God looks at our heart. Not just the outward things.

One of my favorite devotional songs is "Create in Me A Clean Heart Oh God."

The words are taken straight from **Psalms 51:10** when David learned that lesson.

Ironically, it was because of his innocent, pure heart that God chose him in the first place.

Remember how Samuel chose David to be king?

Samuel didn't want to choose David, but God said he was looking into David's heart.

David learned from his mistake with Bethsheba and **Psalms 51:10** is his confession.

Would a clean heart speak good things? Of course. But it must be purified!

James 4:8 says that we need to have clean hearts because it might also cause us to have a clean mouth!

III. Third, we should ask God for help.

James 3:13 reminds us that if we are wise and understanding, we will seek God's will.

Seeking God's will . . . can also affect our behavior. Faith produces good works.

We've heard that before haven't we? Faith without works is dead!

Later in chapter five, James will talk more about praying effective fervent prayers.

Prayer should be natural for a Christian. Not just in worship, but all the time.

Think about how many times we see Jesus praying, or the early church.

I find that when I pray for help, it feels like God is right there with me.

Isn't that one of His promises? He will never leave us nor forsake us?

Asking God for help is a much better use of our tongue.

We can praise Him and ask Him for anything in faith, and we will receive it.

IV. *Fourth, we need to talk less and listen more.*

Most of us would have a hard time with this, if we are honest with ourselves.

However, this is just good advice and taught by Solomon in **Proverbs 10:19** and **29:20**.

James 1:19 says we should be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

Have you ever met an annoying person who just wouldn't stop talking?

You stand there, nodding your head, listening, but wondering if they will ever stop.

James hopes that after reading his letter you will see the danger in that practice.

Christians need to listen more.

If you will read your New Testament, and study the life of Jesus, you will see there are many stories about him stopping to listen to people along the road.

Even if He was headed to a preaching appointment, or to heal someone, He would stop and listen to people and help to meet their needs.

This is a sign of a caring and compassionate person.

V. *Finally, we need to have positive speech.*

Passages like **Colossians 4:6** and **Ephesians 4:29** give us Paul's advice.

"Season your words with salt" and "speak the truth in love."

But notice how James says blessing and cursing should not come out of the same mouth.

Could this be said of you? Have you allowed yourself to bless and curse?

James says these actions are earthly, sensual, and demonic!

Christians ought to know better than that. . . . we need positive speech.

We need to talk like Jesus, walk like Jesus, and transform into the image of Jesus.

We CANNOT take our focus off of CHRIST, no matter what obstacles come our way.

After all, we call ourselves Christians. . . . maybe we should start acting like Him and speaking like Him. . . . So people can see Jesus in us!

Maybe the Golden Rule applies here. . . Don't just treat others the way you want to be treated. . . .But also speak to others the way you want them to speak to you!

Conclusion: Before I leave you today let me share an illustration with you. Have you heard the story about the woman who was listening to a Sunday morning message on the parable of the talents? As she left the auditorium she greeted her preacher and said, "I think I finally know what my talent is. It's to speak my mind." He glared at her and then said, "I don't think God would mind if you bury that talent." We are often too quick to speak, when we need to be patient and prayerfully consider our words. This advice from James could not only change our heart, but also our influence with others. If we are going to work till Jesus comes, we have to learn how to work our mouth. So, as I close my lesson, I hope you will keep these thoughts in mind. Admit the problem. Focus on the heart. Ask God for help. Talk less. Listen more. Have positive speech. And never forget that great advice from your parents..... "Watch your mouth!"