

**Victoria Fellowship Church**  
**International & Interdenominational**  
**Bible Study Worksheet – May 15, 2022**

**Theme:** James: Faith in Action **Topic:** Bridle Your Tongue

**Main Text:** James 3:1-12

**Key verse:** James 3:2 *“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” (NKJV)*

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**INTRODUCTION:** The tongue is one of five sensory organs in the human body. Apart from the important role it plays in helping us taste our foods, it is also vital in the formation of speech and sounds. The formation of speech is a key factor which distinguishes the human tongue from those of other creatures. But while we celebrate our unique ability of speech, compared to other creatures, Proverbs 18:21 says, *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* The power to heal, to encourage, to uplift, and to build up. The tongue also has the power to render a lot of harm. It has the power to discourage, to tear down, to demoralize, to dehumanize and to destroy. The Bible likens the destructive power of the tongue to that of a small spark which sets off a wildfire.

**1. (a) James likens the tongue to a horse bit, a rudder on a ship, and a tiny spark. Why? What is the relevance of these comparisons? (b) What are some of the pitfalls of an unbridled tongue? (see Proverbs 13:3; Matthew 15:11; James 3:5-8). (c) As Christians, what should characterize the words we speak? (Read Proverbs 16:24; Ephesians 4:25, 29).**

People say ungodly things around us every day, they spew all manner of unwholesome words and ideologies. We hear them on social media platforms, in our workplaces, in the market, when we hang out with friends, even in our homes and sadly, in our churches. Against this backdrop, we read in the Bible that *“For we all stumble and sin in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says [never saying the wrong thing], he is a perfect man [fully developed in character, without serious flaws], able to bridle his whole body and rein in his entire nature [taming his human faults and weaknesses].”* (James 3:2 AMP). There is a saying that the reason we have one mouth and two ears is so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. In other words, listen more, talk less.

**2. (a) Why does James caution the believers against becoming teachers, and why is it important, particularly for the Christian to know this? (Read James 3:1-2; Matthew 12:36-37) (b) What correlation do you find between taming the tongue and spiritual maturity (see Proverbs 10:4; 1 Peter 2:21-23) (c) James 3:2a acknowledges that sometimes, we all make mistakes. What should we do when we speak out of line? (Read Proverbs 6:2-3).**

Earlier in James' epistle, God made it clear just how vital our tongue is when it comes to living out our faith when He said, *‘If you think you are being religious, but can't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is useless.’* (James 1:26 CEV). This formed the basis for the teaching in James chapter 3:1-12 about bridling the tongue. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines a bridle as the headgear with which a horse is governed and which carries a bit and reins. With something as small as a bridle, even a little child can control a horse which is way bigger and powerful than the child. The bridle works like magic: with it, the one holding the reins can control the direction of the horse's head; and the horse can only go where its head goes. And James 3:5 says one can control the tongue only if one can bridle it. But how? How do we control something the Bible says is humanly impossible (James 3:8)? This is especially important because God sees it as an aberration for anyone to curse people who were created in God's likeness with the same tongue with which they praise Him (James 3:9).

**3. (a) According to Psalm 39:1; 141:3; Proverbs 21:23; what practical steps do these passages offer for bridling the tongue? (b) Mathew 12:34 and Luke 6:45 say that *out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks* (ESV). What does this tell us about where to start the process of bridling the tongue? (See Psalm 119:11; Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:16). What practical steps can one take in this direction? (c) What do you commit to start doing from today in obedience to God's instruction that we bridle our tongues?**

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**Prayer:** Dear God, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You. May they always edify the body of Jesus Christ and glorify You. In Jesus Name, Amen.