

## New Covenant Lifestyle: Lesson 10 – Role of the Tongue

This final lesson in the New Covenant Lifestyle module looks at how we exercise our dominion in bringing the kingdom of heaven into this natural world – by what we say. I recommend you go back and read New Covenant Principles Lesson 5 on Dominion. That lesson presented the truth that we are made in the image of God as Speaking Spirits. Dominion over this natural world was given to us by God. The two components of dominion are authority and power. We exercise authority by speaking and the power of the real world makes what we speak come to pass. This power comes either from God or from Satan. **Jeremiah 1:12** says that God watches over His word to perform it. So when you speak God’s word, your covenant status releases God’s power to perform it. Conversely, if you speak anything else, it releases the evil powers to perform it. What we say is vitally important.

Solomon presented this truth very powerfully in **Proverbs 18:20-21**. Read this passage and answer the following:

What satisfies our innermost being (belly)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What fills a man? \_\_\_\_\_.

Write out verse 21: \_\_\_\_\_.

Is there power in the tongue (the words you speak)? \_\_\_\_\_.

Where does this power come from? \_\_\_\_\_.

What are the two categories that words fall into? \_\_\_\_\_.

What happens to the fruit of the words we choose to speak? \_\_\_\_\_.

The role of our tongue is to direct our lives and circumstances. What we say causes results to manifest in this world. Every man has an inherent, built-in knowledge that we control things by what we say. How many times have you spoken to your car? How about objects in your house, or plants or a golf ball in flight. Why do you speak to inanimate objects? Because, you intuitively know that the creation is supposed to obey your words. Why? Because you are made in the image of God; you exercise dominion through your spoken words.

Since words have power and are how we exercise dominion, it follows that we need to be careful about what we say and how we speak. Let’s investigate what James has to say about the tongue. Read **James 1:18-25**.

How were we begotten of God (v18)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What should we be swift to do (v19) \_\_\_\_\_.

What do you think James is telling us we should be hearing? \_\_\_\_\_.

What two things are we told to be slow to do (v19)? \_\_\_\_\_.

The word Greek word translated ‘wrath’ is ‘*orgen*’ which means ‘*strong desire, violent passion*’. This wrath is an outflow of human performance and selfishness. Verse 20 tells us that strong desire (self effort) cannot make us righteous. Believing on Jesus is the only thing that can make anyone righteous. In verse 21 the verbs (KJV) ‘lay apart’, ‘receive’ and ‘save’ are Aorist tense, while ‘is able’ is present tense. Given this, answer the following:

What have we already laid aside (v21)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What have we already received? \_\_\_\_\_.

When was the salvation (welfare, wholeness) of our soul done? \_\_\_\_\_.

What now activates this salvation in us every day? \_\_\_\_\_.

The reality is that when we let the engrafted word operate in our life, we will live in full salvation. This is the power of the first clause of the New Covenant where God says “I will put my laws in your mind and write them in your hearts”. Sounds like engrafted word to me. This engrafted word then manifests in how we speak.

Now we come to one of the most powerful revelations about what you say. Write out verse 22. \_\_\_\_\_

The Greek word for ‘doer’ is *‘poietai’* which Strong’s defines as “a performer; specifically a ‘poet’: - doer, poet.” James is specifically saying that we should be “poets of the word”. It’s unfortunate that translators picked the word “doer”, but then their religious mindset probably thought that was what James was trying to convey – that you need to do what the word says to do. In reality, James is saying that we are people who “poet” the word. Another way of saying “poet of the word” is “righteous speaker”. So James is saying that if you just hear the word and don’t become a speaker of it, then you deceive yourself. There are a lot of people who regularly hear the word taught (although unfortunately a lot of them hear it full of mixture) and can even discuss and debate theology, doctrine and meanings. Yet, they have not let the word transform their thinking so that the truth becomes what they say. Instead, they continue to speak their human experience, logic and reasoning and in doing so, they deceive themselves. When we agree with what God says (let him write it in our minds), our speech declares what God says – we become poets of the word. Now God can produce the fruit of the word in our lives – everything from health to wealth to success to miracles; His power changing lives and circumstances.

What is a “hearer only” like (v23-24)? \_\_\_\_\_

What does James say the mirror analogy is (v25)? \_\_\_\_\_.

Define this mirror in your own words? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do to continue in the benefits of this mirror (v25)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What natural results come from doing this (v25)? \_\_\_\_\_.

In verse 25, the word ‘work’ in “*be a doer of the work*” is the same Greek word that is used as ‘deed’ in “*blessed in his deed*”. This sounds like an instruction that in order to continue in the perfect law of liberty, we must become doers of works. That is the mixture interpretation of this verse. How does the Covenant of Grace fit with this, since we know that our works can have nothing to do with it? The perfect law of liberty is the freedom we have because of what Jesus did on the cross. To continue in this liberty, we must not forget the reality of what Jesus has done (*being not forgetful hearers*). We must remember it and become poets of Jesus’ work on the cross – our work is to believe on Jesus (**John 6:29**). We continuously declare and extol the virtues of Jesus and the benefits of His death and resurrection. We proclaim the wholeness, provision, protection, son-ship, redemption, wisdom and communion that have been freely given to us in the work that Jesus has done for us. Our being poets of Jesus completed work results in us being blessed in everything Holy Spirit leads us to do.

Coupled with our being poets of Jesus work is the reality that we poet by faith, and this results in our performing works that bring glory to God and justify us before men as being righteous. This is what James is addressing in Chapter 2. When we live in the perfect law of liberty, we don't have respect of persons. We become givers who love others, regardless of their status in life. In **James 2:14-26** the discussion is about faith and works. Many have used this to justify living in mixture, because after all you had better be doing good works because James says that without them your faith is dead (v17). The Greek word for dead is '*nekra*' which means 'a corpse'. This analogy is best seen as saying mixture based faith is phony; it has no life in it.

The key to understanding this passage is realizing that the works are a product of faith; of our faith connecting to Jesus faith, which is us living by faith. James uses two examples from the Old Testament when he is discussing how faith and works are connected. Simply put, his teaching is that: first you have to believe that God has made you righteous by the faith of Jesus – this justifies you before God. Secondly, living in this righteousness (and receiving the abundance of grace, **Romans 5:17**) will result in you doing righteous works in this natural world (as led by Holy Spirit) – this justifies you before men.

The first example James uses is Abraham and his offering up of Isaac (**James 2:21**). How old was Abraham when God declared him righteous by faith (**Genesis 15:5; 17:24-25**)? \_\_\_\_\_.

How old was Abraham when Isaac was born (**Genesis 17:1; 18:10**) \_\_\_\_\_.

Scholars estimate that Isaac was between 13 and 21 when he was offered on the altar. Based on this, how many years after he was declared righteous by faith was Abraham justified by works? \_\_\_\_\_.

The second example is Rahab, the harlot (**James 2:25**). What work justified Rahab before men? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When did Rahab believe in the God of Israel (**Joshua 2:9-11**)? \_\_\_\_\_.

How many years elapsed from when she believed until she hid the spies (**Joshua 5:6**) \_\_\_\_\_.

In Chapter 3, James discusses the role of the tongue. Read verses 2 to 13 and answer the following questions:

How does James identify a perfect man (**James 3:2**)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the perfect man able to do (v2)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What are bits used for (v3)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What are ships' rudders used for (v4)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What is the tongue identified as in verse 5? \_\_\_\_\_.

What is the tongue called in verse 6? \_\_\_\_\_.

What can the tongue defile (v6)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What can no man tame (v8)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What should not happen in our lives (v10)? \_\_\_\_\_.

If no man can tame the tongue, then how can the fountain of our lives (our speech) produce only sweet water (v11) and the trees and vines the right fruit (our behavior) (v12). The answer is found back in **James 2:12**. Write out this verse: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The key to understanding this verse is the word judged. The Greek word is *'krinesthai'* (G2919) which Strong's states as meaning *"Properly to distinguish, that is, decide (mentally or judicially)"* and its declension shows it is present tense. This verse says that we are *"distinguished by the perfect law of liberty"*. The only thing that can tame our tongue is our living in the perfect law of liberty. When we reject self effort and performance and rest solely in Jesus completed work, the fire of the tongue is extinguished and we poet the truth, the sweet water of life. It is very important to keep our eyes fixed on the righteousness we are and receive the abundance of grace every day – that is remembering who we are in the perfect law of liberty and it will control our tongue.

Now read **James 4:17**. You have probably heard this verse used to put people under guilt and condemnation for not doing good works or to manipulate people into doing some good work. However, that is a poor translation. The Greek says *"Therefore, to him that knows to abide in virtue (faith, righteousness = perfect law of liberty) and abides not in it; he misses the mark"*. Missing the mark means falling from grace (**Galatians 5:4**). Hopefully, now you can see that it has nothing to do with *"failure to do good is sinning"*. This verse is saying that failing to live in the perfect law of liberty (continually in righteousness and grace) will result in living in mixture; in self effort.

I am sure it has become obvious to you through this study that the tongue plays a vital role in our lives. We have seen that death and life are activated by what we say. It is the authority of our words that cause the real world's power to flow into this natural world. **Psalm 50:23 puts it this way:** to enjoy salvation (welfare, health, etc.) we need to order our conversation aright. What we need to know is, how do we *"order our conversation aright"*? Let's see what Jesus said about it. Read **Luke 6:45**. This teaching of Jesus is also found in **Matthew 12:34-37**. Read this passage and answer the following:

What justifies or condemns a man (Matthew 12:37)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What is the source of the words a man speaks (Matthew 12:34)? \_\_\_\_\_.

In this teaching Jesus is getting on the Pharisees about their self-righteousness and hypocrisy. He is very clear that the words a man speaks identify what he believes in his heart. The Jews believed they were righteous by their self performance; by keeping the Rabbinical rules. Jesus told them that their words showed evil hearts. This tells us that the key to *"ordering our conversation aright"* is by believing right in our hearts! It is not what we do, it is what we believe. Right believing leads to right speaking which results in right living. Hence, the importance of the first clause of the New Covenant – *"I will put my laws (my way of thinking and believing) in your heart and write them in your mind"*. How awesome is our God; He has covenanted to do the impossible (control our tongue) for us by transforming our believing. Our part is simply to agree with what he teaches us about grace and righteousness and embrace that thinking so that it becomes our thinking. The result is we will start speaking what God speaks and that releases His power to work for us.

One final thought. How do you define a mature Christian? Is it one who shows Godly character, or who has been a scholar of the word for many years, or who is considered a pillar in the church, or one who knows the Bible, or one who always talks correctly? Interestingly, all of these can be done by self effort; look at the Pharisees. I suspect each of us has a concept of maturity based on our experience and what we have been taught. But that probably doesn't match how God defines a mature Christian. To find out God's definition, read **Hebrews 5:13**. God defines a baby Christian as one who *"is unskillful in the word of righteousness"*. A mature Christian is one who absolutely knows he is righteous because of Jesus complete work. He has chosen to live by resting in that righteousness and continually receives the abundance of grace. The mature Christian is self performance (mixture) free and his tongue pours out good things. He declares what God says and miracles result, because he has embraced what God has written in his heart and his words manifest God's way of thinking.