



**SUMMER-TIME
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**
Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
September 14, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

ACCEPTING GUIDANCE

No human being can tame the tongue.

James 3:8

READ James 3:2-11

The air smelled of leather and oats as we stood in the barn where my friend Michelle was teaching my daughter to ride a horse. Michelle's white pony opened its mouth as she demonstrated how to place the bit behind its teeth. As she pulled the bridle over its ears, Michelle explained that the bit was important because it allowed the rider to slow the horse and steer it to the left or right.

A horse's bit, like the human tongue, is small but important. Both have great influence over something big and powerful—for the bit, it's the horse. For the tongue, it's our words (James 3:3, 5).

Our words can run in different directions. "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings" (v. 9). Unfortunately, the Bible warns that it's very hard to control our speech because words spring from our hearts (Luke 6:45). Thankfully, God's Spirit, who indwells every believer, helps us grow in patience, goodness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). As we cooperate with the Spirit, our hearts change and so do our words. Profanity turns to praise. Lying gives way to truth. Criticism transforms into encouragement.

Taming the tongue isn't just about training ourselves to say the right things. It's about accepting the Holy Spirit's guidance so that our words generate the kindness and encouragement our world needs.

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

PRAY & REFLECT

Dear God, please change my heart so that my words encourage others and honor You. Amen

What inner attitudes come out through your words? How might cooperation with the Spirit influence your speech?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

James challenges his readers about the use and power of words. He makes several analogies to small things that have a big impact: a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, a tiny spark. In the same way, controlling the relatively small tongue can keep the "whole body in check" (3:2).

The book of Proverbs also has a great deal to say about the use of the tongue (and its consequences). This topic is referenced more than any other topic in Proverbs (see 6:16-17; 10:20, 31; 12:18-19; 15:2, 4; 17:20; 18:21; 21:6; 25:15, 23; 26:28; 28:23). —

By J.R. Hudberg

Used with permission