

Scripture Reading: James 3:1-12

It's better to bite your tongue than eat your words! —Anon.

In verse 8 of today's reading, the apostle James makes a provocative assertion: "No one can tame the tongue — a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

Do you think this sainted apostle is exaggerating just a little? "No one can tame the tongue." Really? *No one?*

Surely, *someone* in the long history of the human race has been able to control the words that come out of the mouth. Perhaps that someone is *you*.

- Don't you use your words to bless people rather than curse them?
- Don't you offer sweet-smelling words that purify the air around you?
- Don't you use your words to lift others up rather than to tear them down?

Doctors tell us that there are many diseases associated with the tongue. These include discoloration, soreness, pain, redness and swelling. There are diseases of the mouth and tongue called leukoplakia, oral candidiasis, keratosis pharynges, glossitis, hypoglossia and of course halitosis — bad breath.

But James isn't talking about spiritual halitosis. Instead, he's peeved about those people, even Christian teachers (see verse 1), who use their mouths and tongue in a destructive way — "a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

I am sure you know that in today's world there's more talking, jabbering, caterwauling, name-calling, shouting and jeering than ever before in the history of humankind.

You can recall the days long ago when you could express your opinion to those beyond your neighborhood *only* by writing a letter to the editor, by getting on the black Bell rotary telephone to call Uncle Henry and Aunt Eunice who lived three states away or by stepping inside the voting booth every two years. Perhaps, in some ways, it was a more quiet way of life when we didn't know everyone's opinion.

Words that are negative, doubtful, vengeful and profane do not bless others. They slowly wear on us, filling our air with sadness and gloom, like dust settles on furniture.

Let's keep on blessing people! Let's use our mouths and words to encourage others! Let's start today!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I forget how powerful my words are. This week, may I use my words to encourage others and to calm troubled spirits. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** 1 Thessalonians 1-5
Monday: 2 Chronicles 7-9
Tuesday: 2 Chronicles 10-13
Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 14-16
Thursday: 2 Chronicles 17-19
Friday: 2 Chronicles 20-22
Saturday: Psalms 100-102

JUMBLE!

Directions: Each of the six scrambled words has a connection with each other. That connection is revealed in the two-word solution below that must be unscrambled using the letters in the shaded boxes.

I	C	A	H	M			
K	A	K	K	B	H	A	U
B	O	J					
W	R	E	B	H	E	S	
S	M	A	O				
M	A	L	S	E	U		

I	K	B	B	O	B	S	O	L	E

Solution to JUMBLE: Micah, Habakkuk, Job, Hebrews, Amos, Samuel. **BIBLE BOOKS:** COMMON WORDS: 1. last, 2. chicken, 3. picture, 4. paper, 5. green, 6. cherry, 7. house, 8. girl, 9. white, 10. gold, 11. straight, 12. glass, 13. free, 14. yellow.

COMMON WORDS

Directions: Add one word to the beginning of each word in the series to create a phrase. For example, to the words alert, carpet and herring you could insert the word red to create red alert, red carpet and red herring. Write the word that is common to all in the space provided.

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| 1. rites, straw, word: | 8. friend, scout, Friday: |
| 2. little, leg, casserole: | 9. hat, elephant, knight: |
| 3. frame, perfect, this: | 10. digger, dust, brick: |
| 4. weight, tiger, mache: | 11. ahead, line, away: |
| 5. thumb, hornet, earth: | 12. eye, house, blower: |
| 6. picker, bomb, tomato: | 13. association, fall, lance: |
| 7. arrest, plant, fly: | 14. jacket, fever, journalism: |

