

Sermon or Lesson: James 3:9-12 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Unacceptable Duality Of The Tongue

INTRO: Over the last decade or so, and especially since the rise of social media, have you noticed a major increase in the frequency of the use of foul language to cuss out and curse other people? Also, have you noticed the same trend in movies, where even the good characters profusely and routinely curse other people using cuss word labels? Being so common and widespread in our society today, has cursing other people become a typical reaction for you when you encounter someone who offends or mistreats you?

Let's take some time now to analyze from God's Word why our cursing of other people is a problem to God.

READ: James 3:9-12

v.9 - READ

[Lesson Question: What is the principle in each verse and what is its application in our lives?]

SECTION POINT: With the same tongue, we praise God and inappropriately curse men.

"curse" = Strong's #2672 "curse; to execrate; by analogy, to doom"

'execrate' = (AHD) "To declare to be abhorrent; denounce; To feel loathing for, despise, detest, scorn; To regard with extreme dislike, hostility, contempt; To invoke evil or injury upon"

The desire that the recipient be cut off from God and experience eternal punishment; to pronounce damnation upon.

- - Contradictory incompatible opposites: We speak words of praise about God, whom we recognize, honor, and worship as the supreme deity of the universe and the one who gave us existence; and then we speak words of curse about other fellow beings, whom He created in the same way He created us and who bear His likeness and image just like us.

- - Because of what we are created as, we humans are worthy of respectful regard and treatment.

Q: What is a good way to regard a person who is evil and hurtful to others?

- - We need to separate the person from their actions, simultaneously view and regard them in 2 ways: love and respect the person while simultaneously opposing their evil; look beyond the evil they are perpetrating to see the image of God they possess. Train yourself to do this.

v.10 - READ

SECTION POINT: Our mouth should not speak cursing.

- - God views our dualistic speaking of praises to Him and speaking of curses to our fellow human beings as being inappropriate, unacceptable, inconsistent, and incongruent, not fitting together in any way.

- - We who are "brothers" should not be doing this.

- - By implication, we "brothers" do not have the right to curse other human beings, to judge them or to verbalize hostile regard of them.

- - We believers should realize and remember that in our former condition of being unsaved, we were in the same condition they are still in, enslaved by depravity. (cf. Romans 1:28-29)

vv.11-12 - READ

SECTION POINT: We can only produce what is consistent with our nature.

- - The examples of the springs in verses 11-12: It is impossible for a fresh water spring to produce both fresh water and salt water, and "neither can a salt spring produce fresh water".

- - The examples of the fig tree and the grapevine: It is impossible for a fig tree to bear olives or for a grapevine to bear figs.

- - From these examples, the general principle is that an organism or phenomenon cannot bring forth or produce something that is outside the bounds of its nature.

IMPLICATION:

SECTION POINT: Therefore, we cannot genuinely praise God if we curse men.

- - We naturally produce in accordance with what is inside. But if we extend forth two opposites, then in reality we have produced only one that is authentic and the other one was projected as being authentic but in fact has to be inauthentic.

- - Therefore by implication in this matter about a person speaking praises to God and curses to men, God rejects that praise because He determines it to be inauthentic. As Jesus states in Matthew 12:35, ""The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.""

- - A heart that is good does not produce evil and conversely a heart that is evil cannot produce good.

BIG IDEA: God rejects the praises from a tongue that also curses men.

APPLICATIONS:

- - How does your speaking at church compare to your speaking at home, or at work, or at school, or during your commute?
 - - When you speak words at various places throughout the week, are the quality and the type of words you use compatible with the words you speak when you worship God on Sunday mornings? Why not? What do you suppose God thinks about this, given our study of these verses in James?

 - - Deep down inside, how do you regard other people, especially those who are substantially sinful or worse? Do you see them as fellow human beings or as something less?

 - - When you speak about other people, especially those who are substantially sinful or worse, how do you characterize them and your opinion about how they behave?
 - - Do you essentially curse them, in one form or another, with a fiery tongue?
 - - Do you have favorite choice words, like 'idiot', or 'moron', or worse?
 - - Or do you refrain from cursing them and instead treat them with the respect God says they deserve as your fellow human beings?
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