



COURAGEOUS

CHRISTIANS

Courageous Christians: James

(taken from the book of James)

Dear friends,

As you know, all of us often make mistakes, and often in what we say. I'd be surprised if a person never made a mistake in what they said – they would have to be perfect and able to control their whole body! That is really hard! Although our tongues are a really small part of our bodies, they can boast and tell lies and wound in a BIG way.

Think about horse-riding. We put a bit into the mouth of a horse to make it obey us, and we are able to make it go where we want. Or think of a sailing ship: big as it is and driven by such strong winds, it can be steered by a very small rudder, and it goes wherever the captain wants it to go. It is just the same with our tongue: small as it is, we must learn to control what we say and how we say it because it is very powerful!

Just think how large a forest can be set on fire by a tiny flame! And the tongue is like a fire. Nasty words can cause much damage, just like a forest fire. Even a few words can be discouraging if used in the wrong way! But God's Holy Spirit can help us to use our tongues to bring encouragement and give strength to others. We humans are able to tame and have tamed all other creatures—wild animals and birds, reptiles and fish. But without the Holy Spirit, no one has ever been able to tame the tongue. It can hurt others and be uncontrollable, like a deadly poison. The Holy Spirit wants us to use our tongues to worship God and help one another. Think about that - words of encouragement and discouragement can pour out from the same mouth. My friends, this should not happen! No water fountain pours out fresh water and salt water from the same opening. An apple tree, my friends, cannot bear cherries; a pear tree cannot bear apples, nor can the sea produce drinking water.

Don't be jealous of each other, be wise and look to God for help. God's wisdom is pure, peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of kindness. Encourage one another – give away your courage to spur each other on. Being a Christian today can be tough! Stick together. Don't criticize each other and don't fight. Be patient. And above all, keep praying! Pray about everything and everyone, always.

With love and grace from your brother,

James