**THE DECEPTION OF THE TONGUE**

Sunday School Lesson 8

*Deceptions of the Devil*

James 1:26

10/10/2021

**Introduction:** The tongue is a great adversary to the Christian. The Bible has much to say about the tongue, and it is mostly spoken of with great warnings attached to it. The tongue can cause harm both to the speaker and also to the recipient of the words of the tongue. The Bible tells us that the tongue is very powerful despite it being such a little member of the body. It is important to note that the power of the tongue can work both for good and for evil. As an example, the preaching of the Gospel is done through the use of the tongue. Encouragement is given through the use of the tongue. In James 1, we learn that the tongue is even more powerful and dangerous because of its deceitfulness. To this point, we have looked at the deceitfulness of other gods, reaping, wisdom, hearing, pride, the last day, and unrighteousness. Each one of these topics has shown us just how easy it is to fall victim to the deception of the devil. He regularly uses our own feelings and thoughts to persuade us to believe his lies. We have also seen how he uses others to influence us into being deceived. Naturally, we can expect that these same tactics are present in the deception of the tongue. In fact, regarding the usage of feelings and thoughts in the work of deception, we will see even more of it as we look at the deception of the tongue today. Let’s examine some thoughts about this deception.

1. **THE DECEPTION OF THE TONGUE EXCUSES WORDS SPOKEN AS INSIGNIFICANT.**
2. **Notice that a seemingly religious man will excuse his words as insignificant to his religion (James 1:26; 1 John 3:18; Colossians 3:17).** This is what James 1:26 is speaking about. The entire book of James is a challenge to the believer to check that his actions match with his faith. Chapter one of James is the same chapter that we looked at when discussing the deception of hearing without doing. We have undoubtedly all said things before that we later lamented speaking. We often claim in these situations that we have said things that we did not mean. While it is certainly possible to make foolish statements that do not align with the thoughts of the mind or the emotions of the heart, we must be careful not to deceive ourselves into thinking that our words are insignificant to our walk with the Lord. We like to look at other verses such as 1 John 3:18 which emphasizes actions over words, but that verse is not meant to invalidate the things that we speak. The Bible tells us that the seemingly religious man who excuses his unbridled tongue has a religion that is vain. It is superficial. It is hollow. We must consider whatsoever we do in WORD and deed. This means that our words ought to be in the name of the Lord.
3. **Notice that the words that come out of the mouth originate from the heart (Matthew 15:10-20).** This principle comes directly from the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Jewish leaders were upset with His disciples because they ate without washing their hands. The Lord instructed them that the food going into the mouth did not defile the man. Instead, it is that which comes out of the man that defiles him. Where do those things come from? They come from the heart. Again, this is in direct contradiction to how we often justify our words. We ought to consider why we speak the words that we do. If you are always speaking words of anger, then you must accept the fact that those words are coming from the heart. You might try to convince yourself that there is no anger there, but our words tell on us. As we consider the Jewish leaders living during the time of the early church, what is the opinion that we form regarding who these men are? Were they Godly men who loved the Lord, or were they jealous men who had a false piety about them? I think we would agree that these men were ungodly. What evidence do we have to validate this opinion? We have their words. This is how we know them.
4. **THE DECEPTION OF THE TONGUE ACCEPTS THAT IT CANNOT BE TAMED.**
5. **Notice that the Bible speaks of the struggle involved in taming the tongue (James 3:1-11).** The issue is not with the idea that the tongue is hard to tame. The Bible states as much very clearly to us. In fact, the Bible tells us that the tongue can no man tame. If we were to stop right there and not consider anything else, then we would be led to think that there is nothing we can do about the tongue. Of course, this would be a gross error on our behalf to only consider a portion of the text without considering what message the Bible is conveying to us. In the same chapter of Scripture, the Bible warns about a tongue that speaks both blessing and cursing. It clearly says that these things ought not so to be. If this passage were meant to show that there was nothing one could do about the tongue, why would there be admonishment regarding the actions of the tongue? Clearly, the Bible is trying to get our attention about the dangers of the tongue and the need to take action against it. The tongue, though, would have us be deceived into thinking that there is nothing we can do to prevail against it.
6. **Notice that the Bible speaks of refraining, bridling, and keeping our tongues (1 Peter 3:10; Proverbs 16:1; 21:23; Psalm 34:13; 39:11).** In Psalm 39:11, David plainly states that he will keep his mouth with a bridle. A few chapters earlier in the book of Psalms we are told to keep our tongue from evil. 1 Peter 3:10 commands us to refrain our tongue from evil. This shows us that it is certainly possible to bridle the tongue. In fact, it’s not just possible; it is expected. We train our children to bridle their tongues. We are trained in the jobsite to bridle our tongues. Hopefully, we learned from a young age that we cannot say what we want whenever we want. A fool is one that uttereth all his mind. How do we reconcile all that the Bible is striving to teach us on this topic of the tongue? I believe that we see the Bible showing us that we need the Lord’s help to bridle the tongue. Man cannot do this without the indwelling of the Lord within him. That’s because the tongue will eventually reveal our hearts. Thus, we need the Lord to work in our hearts. We need His Spirit to change us internally for power over the tongue.
7. **THE DECEPTION OF THE TONGUE ENCOURAGES ITSELF THROUGH ITS BOASTINGS.**
8. **Notice that while the tongue is powerful, it can also be deceptive about the extent of that power (Psalm 12:1-4; 120:2 Proverbs 18:19-21; 10:31; Isaiah 54:17; Romans 3:13-20).** Death and life are in the power of the tongue. This was especially true during the days of the Old Testament. With a simple decree from the king, life could be taken away from an individual. There is no refuting the power of the tongue. Yet, the tongue also overamplifies its own power. Your own tongue should not have power over you, and someone else’s words cannot take away the most important thing that you have – your salvation. We do not have to fear the tongue. We fear the Lord, and that causes us to bring the tongue into subjection. The tongue boasteth great things. That does not make those things true. There have been many who have spoken great things against the Lord with their tongues. Yet, the Bible tells us that every tongue shall confess. The tongue of man cannot prevail against the Lord. He knows every word that will be spoken before it is ever uttered out of the mouth. The tongue cannot back up its speech!
9. **Notice that the deceitful tongue is great at flattery (Psalm 5:9; 36:2; 78:36; Proverbs 17:4; 26:28; 29:5).** The tongue excels in its deception through the use of flattery. Now, we often think of flattery in just the way that it affects others, but let us consider the self-flattery that takes place with the tongue. Many have been deceived by their own words. Consider how foolish it is that we allow our own words to deceive ourselves. There are those who are convinced of their own greatness because of the flattery that they have given to themselves. In fact, society encourages this behavior. People are encouraged to boost their own self-esteem by speaking positive words of encouragement to themselves. Just tell yourself that you can do it, and it will all work out! Unfortunately, that’s not reality. I can do all things THROUGH CHRIST. That’s the only answer. We’ve all met those or might have personally been one of those who can’t back up what they speak, and many of them truly believed that they could. Let us not be deceived by the tongue and the flattery that it likes to speak.
10. **THE DECEPTION OF THE TONGUE ACKNOWLEDGES IT AS A WEAPON TO BE USED.**
11. **Notice that the deceitful tongue loves devouring words (Psalm 52:4).** By now in this lesson, we should understand that the tongue is not our friend. It is to be subjected and then used for the glory of the Lord. In its natural condition, though, it has a love for devouring words. The tongue is selfish. The tongue is prideful. The tongue like to win. Can you find an individual who enjoys losing an argument? Can you find someone who does not care at all to have the final word? The truth is that our mouth wants to win. It wants to say the smartest thing. It does not mind cutting others down to lift its owner up. There is a reason that we find more Bible references to deceit and the tongue together than any other topic that we have considered so far. Many people do not recognize how unruly and wicked the tongue can be. Do children naturally have a tongue that speaks kind things? No. They must be taught kindness from the Word of God. Yet, their tongues do not have to be taught cutting remarks, lies, and insults.
12. **Notice that the wicked use the tongue as a weapon against others, but the believer ought to view the tongue as a source of life (Psalm 52:2; 57:4; 140:3; Prov. 15:2-4; 26:28; Jer. 9:8; Micah 6:12).** The Bible speaks of the wicked using the tongue as a sharp weapon. In Jeremiah, we find the tongue being referred to as a sharp arrow that is shot out. The deception of the tongue calls for us to use it as a weapon that produces personal gain. Yet, the call for the believer is to use the tongue as a tree of life. Truly, our tongues ought to be a well of life to those in this world. That’s not because of our own goodness or wisdom, but it’s the Well that dwells inside of us that produces life. Our mouths are just the spickets that bring that Water out for others to enjoy. What do we use our tongues for? Are we more interested in using the tongue to defend ourselves and cut at others, or are we willing to use our tongues as a source of life to those who are needy of it in this world? Let’s not be deceived by the tongue!