

TITLE: "SEEKING PERFECTION"

TEXT: James 3:2-12; Mt. 12:34-37; Ephe. 4:29-32;  
James 1:19

INTRODUCTION: How many of you here this morning desire perfection in your life? That's a pretty broad statement. Let me narrow the field a little—How many of you desire perfection in your walk with the Lord? To be as right on with God as you can possibly be?

How many of you feel that you have attained that goal?

That you have reached the high mark of perfection in your walk with the Lord? That you have arrived, have attained all that God has for you to attain?

If you haven't reached that goal, how many would like to find out how to attain perfection in your walk with the Lord and in your relationships with others?

Scripture tells us what must transpire in our life in order for us to attain any degree of perfection....

**Jame 3:2 (NIV) We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

**We all stumble in many ways!**

How many can say amen to that statement of fact?

The word we translate stumble here is;

**4417 ptaio {ptah'-yo}**

**AV - offend 3, stumble 1, fall 1; 5**

**1) to cause one to stumble or fall**

**2) to stumble**

**2a) to err, make a mistake, to sin**

**2b) to fall into misery, become wretched**

Has anyone here this morning ever stumbled at some point in your life? Erred, made a mistake, sinned, fell into misery, became wretched or caused someone else to stumble or fall?

Sure we have! Scripture says that we have all stumbled in many ways....

What is interesting here is what Scripture attributes to our main source of stumbling or falling or offending to....

**We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

Our speech, our tongue, what comes out our mouths is our main or primary source of stumbling.

**If anyone is never at fault in what he says, (his speech, what comes out his mouth) he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

PERFECT

**5046 teleios {tel'-i-os}**

**1) brought to its end, finished**

**2) wanting nothing necessary to completeness**

**3) perfect**

**4a) consummate human integrity and virtue**

**4b1) full grown, adult, of full age, mature**

If anyone is never at fault in what he says he is a perfect man..

Perfect! Brought to its end! Wanting nothing necessary to completeness!

Has consummated human integrity and virtue.

Is full grown, grown up or mature.

**If a man is never at fault in what he says he is a perfect man able to keep his whole body in check!**

What is the correlation between our speech and all the rest of our actions?

How does mastering our speech effect how we act and behave in other areas of our life?

James goes on and explains how....

**Jame 3:3 (NIV) When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.**

**4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.**

James gives us two examples here

First.. A bit that we put in a horses mouth. It is small, almost minuet, in contrast to the size of a horse, yet with it we can control the whole animal..

Secondly,

A rudder on a great ship is small, almost insignificant in size compared to the rest of the ship but that little rudder determines the course that the ship will take. With that little rudder the pilot can control the entire ship....

**5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

Forest fires that have consumed thousands and thousands of acres of timber often are started by a small spark—a cigarette ash, a dropped match, a spark from a campfire..

**6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**

**7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,**

**8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**

On a 160 LB person the tongue represents about 2 one thousandths of their total body weight; yet the tongue is the most powerful member of our body!

The tongue can determine what direction the rest of the body will take.

It is like a spark in contrast to the rest of our being, but like a spark it is capable of doing great destruction...

**Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

**6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**

Guys, if we verbally lose it, we blow up at our wives or our children or anyone else, speak unkind words---our tongues have been set on fire by hell!

Wives, you lose it and verbally blow up at your husbands or children or family or friends or anyone else, you speak unkind words then your tongues have been set on fire by hell!

It is like Satan is running around with a book of matches ready to set on fire any tongue that he sees is dry kindling ready to be set ablaze.

James goes on and applies this specifically to we the Church...

**9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.**

**10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.**

**11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?**

**12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.**

Jesus was addressing the Pharisees, those perceived as the religious elite of His day, when He said...

**Matt 12:34 (NIV) You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.**

**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.**

**36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.**

**37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."**

Have you ever heard the saying, you are what you eat? Or What goes in is what will come out?

That is what Jesus is saying when He says...

**For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.**

If our heart is overflowing with anger and resentment then that is what is going to come out our lips...

If you see someone that is constantly complaining about something or someone then know that the person that is doing the complaining has a lot of unresolved issues in their own life that they need to take before the Lord to get resolved....

If we fill our lives with the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, goodness, and self-control we will most likely speak words that reflect the same...love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, goodness and self-control!

**For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks!**

What comes out our mouth is a manifestation of what is in our hearts!

The Apostle Paul Gives us this admonition as Christians..

**Ephe 4:29 (NIV) Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**

**30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

**31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.**

**32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

Paul's first admonition to us as Christians here is ...  
**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths!**

The word translated unwholesome is:  
**4550 sapos {sap-ros'}**  
**2) corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out --of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless**

What kind of words are unwholesome, of poor quality, unfit for use, worthless that Paul is talking about here?

Any words that have a tendency to tear down and not lift up. Words that have more of a potential to destroy than they do to build..

Words that are more focused on lifting ourselves up, making ourselves look good, rather than words spoken to help build others up according to their needs.

**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths! but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**

Do not let-- Do not allow **any** unwholesome talk to come out of your mouths.

The responsibility for the words that we speak is ours and ours alone.

The Devil didn't make us do it!  
 He may have planted the thought or feelings there but the devil can't make us do or say anything.

We are to not let, not allow ourselves to speak unwholesome words.

Example: As a young man alcohol was a driving force in my life. I developed a potentially dangerous passion for it at a very young age. When I first came to Christ I had a lot of sin in my life.

When I first accepted Christ do you know what the Lord first placed a heavy conviction on me about—even before my drinking? He first convicted me of my language. I grew up in a culture of swearing.. As a young man working in the grocery business I worked for some of the best cursers on the planet.

Some of them could make swearing sound like poetry!

Some would use foul language as a tool of management. If you would mess up just the foul language coming your way would make a lasting impression....

So I modeled that into my own leadership style. As a young manager I would make my point a lot of times with the foul language that I used.

You know someone has allowed their mouth to become totally corrupted when they swear when they are not even angry...Swear just to put emphasis to a point they are trying to make.

So when I first came to Christ that is what God nailed me on first...Not my drinking, not the lust of my flesh, but the words that I spoke..

And it makes perfect sense....Because once we call ourselves Christian, a Christ like one, it is primarily our words that reflect who and what we are.

So we are to take control of every word that comes out our mouth.

We do that, #1 by thinking before we speak...

How many problems would we alleviate in our lives and in our relationships with others if we would simply take that extra second or two to stop and think about what we are about to say before we say it?

If we would stop just long enough to ask ourselves, "Is what I am about to say going to be helpful in building this person up according to **their** needs or is it not?"

Are the words that I am about to speak to this person for their benefit or are they for my benefit at their expense?

Are the words that I am about to speak words of encouragement or words of discouragement?

Think about it? How would it affect your speech if the only words that you allowed to come out your mouth were wholesome words...

Words that would lift up and benefit and be an encouragement to those who you are speaking to?

How would it have affected the way you have communicated in this past week if you had not allowed any unwholesome words to come out of your mouth?

In reflection, would you have said most of the words that you spoke or would it have been a pretty quiet week for you?

Was your main focus in your conversations with others to build them up according to their needs and encourage them or was the focus of your words more centered upon yourself?

There is an old saying that is not Scripture but it has Scriptural foundation....

*If you don't have anything good to say about someone then don't say anything at all!*

**Jame 1:19 (NIV) My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...**

If we want to be quick to do something in our acts of communication, let us be quick to listen.

But let us be slow to speak. Simply think through what we say before we say it.

Example: Knew a man once who when you were talking with him and might make a statement that normally would require a response on their part he would remain quite.

Sometimes for what seemd like 2-3-4 minutes! And then he might say "That's right".

By the time he would give the answer I had forgot the question!

However I bet he seldom said something that he would later regret...

Be honest, how many of you have said something unwholesome, spoke words that where not useful in building others up and the instant the words came out your mouth you regretted saying them? We say or think I wished I hadn't said that?

How many of you have found times when you wished you had been a lot quicker to listen and a lot slower to speak, a lot slower to get angry?

How many times have we wished that we just could have controlled our tongues?

It is not an easy thing to do! It is possibly the hardest thing in the world for us to do..

In fact, James tells us...

**7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,  
8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**

James tells us here that no man can tame the tongue.

If no man can tame the tongue then how can God expect us to achieve the perfection of speech that He has called us to?

No man can tame the tongue ---but Jesus can!

If this is an area that you struggle with I want to tell you that there is good news.

We may not be able to do it but Jesus can do it in us..

Jesus can do it in us if we allow Him to.  
We can do it through Jesus Christ.

Or more accurately, Jesus can do it through us as we allow Him to. As we give Him lordship of our entire being--Especially lordship of our tongue.

Jesus said out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

We can do it if we allow Jesus to truly overflow our hearts.

The only way to control what comes out our mouth is to control what we allow into our hearts first.

What we need to allow to fill and overflow our hearts with that will give us the ability to control what comes out our mouths, ensure that the words that we speak are useful in building others up according to their needs, is Jesus!

As we fill ourselves with Jesus, feed upon His Word, Take His Word and hide it in our hearts, striving with all our hearts to become more and more like Him, that action will start to manifest itself in our lives. Even in, especially in, our speech-- the words that we speak.

Jesus will help us bring even our tongues into subjection to Himself.

And as we do we will find our words will do more to uplift than tear down, they will be words that build up rather than destroy, they will be words that encourage rather than discourage.

As we fill ourselves with Jesus and give Jesus even the control of our tongues, we will find that we are in fact being perfected in Him, becoming closer and closer to the perfection that God has called us to in Him!

Is that your desire this morning?

To achieve the perfection that God has called you to In Christ?

To become a vessel that God can use to reflect His love to those around you? To be an instrument God uses to lift and build others up according to their needs?

**We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

If we can come to the place of controlling, mastering our tongues, by giving Jesus Lordship over our mouths, we can control every other area of our life also. Everything else will be a cakewalk in comparison.

We will be able to better attain the perfection that God has called us to.

Is it your desire to become the perfect man, the perfect woman, the perfect child that God has called you to be?

Have you given Him control of even the words that you speak? Have you made Him the Lord of your mouth!

Can we say with any degree of honesty that we have given Christ Lordship of our life when we don't give Him control of the words that we speak?

Jesus said...

**36 But I tell you that men (all men) will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.**

**37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."**

Will the words that we speak today be found to be words of acquittal on the day that we stand before the Lord and have to give an account for every word that we have spoken? Or will we find them to be words that will bring condemnation?

What it all comes down to is the Lordship of Jesus Christ...

Have we truly made Him the Lord of our life or not?

Have we even given Him control of the words that we speak?

Are we striving to become the perfect man, woman and child that He has called and equipped us to become?