

# James 3:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

## Analysis

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**Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!** The tongue, though small, boasts great things and can set a forest ablaze. James warns of its destructive potential. Words ignite conflicts, slander, and doctrinal splits.

Reformed communities have seen revivals and divisions sparked by tongues. James calls for reverent handling of speech, aware of its explosive power.

## Historical Context

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In dry Mediterranean climates, small sparks caused massive fires—an image his audience understood. Social tensions among diaspora Jews could erupt through rumors. James urges restraint to prevent communal infernos.",

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What conversations or online interactions risk sparking fires?
2. How can you proactively speak peace into volatile situations?
3. What safeguards will keep your tongue from boasting or burning?

## Interlinear Text

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οὕτως	καὶ	ἡ	γλῶσσα	μικρὸν	μέλος	ἐστὶν	καὶ
so	Even	G3588	the tongue	a little	member	is	Even
G3779	G2532		G1100	G3398	G3196	G2076	G2532
μεγάλαυχεῖ	Ἰδοὺ,	ὀλίγον	πῦρ	ἡλίκην	ὑλὴν	ἀνάπτει·	
boasteth great things	Behold	a little	fire	how great	a matter	kindleth	
G3166	G2400	G3641	G4442	G2245	G5208	G381	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 18:21** (Parallel theme): Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

**Proverbs 12:18** (Parallel theme): There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

**Proverbs 15:2** (Parallel theme): The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

**Psalms 17:10** (Parallel theme): They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

**Psalms 10:3** (Parallel theme): For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

**Jeremiah 18:18** (Parallel theme): Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

**Ezekiel 28:2** (Parallel theme): Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

**Jude 1:16** (Parallel theme): These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

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