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The Good News Journal

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Full of deadly poison

James 3:3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

I read a story of a man years ago who lived in a small village had been found guilty of starting a malicious rumor about another man. This rumor was not only untrue but had seriously damaged the other man's reputation and family. As is often the custom in small villages years ago the accused was taken before the chief of the village who served as a judge and would hear the case and decide the man's punishment if found guilty. After hearing the facts of the case the chief found the accused to be guilty and was now preparing to sentence the man to his punishment. The old wise chief handed the man a large bag of feathers and told him that his punishment would be to place a feather on the doorstep of every person to whom he had told the rumor. The man was relieved at such a light punishment and quickly took the bag of feathers and set about his task. Four hours later the man returned to the chief with the empty bag and said, "I completed the task sir. Is there anything else?" "Yes, the wise chief replied. Report to me in the morning and I'll give you the second half of your punishment." The man reported the next morning and was instructed that the second half of his punishment was to gather all the feathers back up and place them in the bag. "But sir," the man replied, "didn't you hear the storm that raged through our village last night? Didn't you feel the force of the winds that blew? It would be impossible to know where those feathers are now." The wise old chief raised his index finger and pointed knowingly at the man, "Now you see the damage that you have done to another. For although you told only a few lies here and there the storm of gossip took hold of those lies and spread them far beyond your chance to undo them. "You may regret what you say but you can never fully undo what you've said." (Author unknown)

James uses the word fire when describing the tongue in in verse 6 of James chapter 3. Fire has the amazing and unique way of reproducing itself in an almost unlimited way as long as it has fuel to burn. Fire will burn until it runs out of fuel. To stop the fires of gossip and slander we have to remove the source of the fuel. Bible says in *Proverbs 26:20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.* Talebearer is a gossipier. The Bible is saying if you get rid of the gossipier the strife will stop! For many gossipiers though it is a habit and a lifestyle that they love to lead! Those kinds of folks keep adding wood to the fire so to speak and the Bible says in *Proverbs 18:7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.*

The Bible also says in *Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.* This verse says that our tongue has the power to spread the gospel of Christ which is life and if you love it you will eat the fruit thereof. That means that God will reward you with blessings on earth and crowns will be given to you in Heaven according to 1 Corinthians 9:24-25. But there is also the power of the tongue in death! That means there is power in the tongue to drive people away from Christ! Those that drive people away from Christ *shall eat the fruit thereof.* When someone drives others from Christ by their confession of non-belief. Their fruit is death!

God's people should be speaking words to build others up not tear them down. Witness to the lost instead of gossiping about them and for sure don't gossip about your brothers or sisters in Christ if you're saved. It's my prayer that all would come to Christ but I know that all won't but just think if each Christian would lead just one to Christ.

Love in Christ Jesus, Ronnie Miller www.themillersbiblestudy.com