

# The Power of the Tongue

The children's rhyme that says "sticks and stones can break my bones, but names (words) will never hurt me" is painfully not true! Our tongue has incredible power, as seen by this speech:

"The inclination to exchange thoughts with one another is probably an original impulse of our nature. If I be in pain I wish to let you know it, and to ask your sympathy and assistance; and my pleasurable emotions also; I wish to communicate to, and share with you. But to carry on such communication, some *instrumentality* is indispensable. Accordingly speech -- articulate sounds rattled off from the tongue -- was used by our first parents, and even by Adam, before the creation of Eve. He gave names to the animals while she was still a bone in his side; and he broke out quite volubly when she first stood before him, the best present of his Maker. From this it would appear that speech was not an invention of man, but rather the direct gift of his Creator. But whether Divine gift, or invention, it is still plain that if a mode of communication had been left to invention, *speech* must have been the first, from the superior adaptation to the end, of the organs of speech, over every other means within the whole range of nature. Of the organs of speech the tongue is the principal; and if we shall test it, we shall find the capacities of the tongue, in the utterance of articulate sounds, absolutely wonderful."

*Abraham Lincoln, April 6, 1858, excerpt of a lecture on "Discoveries and Inventions" given before the Young Men's Association of Bloomington, Illinois.*

Source: [Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln](http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/discoveries.htm), edited by Roy P. Basler.  
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/discoveries.htm>

Let us look at what the Bible has to say about this subject:

## James 3:1-13

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in **word**, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 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. Even so the **tongue** is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 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. 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: But the **tongue** can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of

the same **mouth** proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good **conversation** his works with meekness of wisdom.“

As we see, the tongue has the ability to proclaim great truth or bring great destruction. On our own, it is not possible to harness the power of the tongue, as whatever is in the heart comes out of the mouth (*Matthew 12:34-37*). I find it interesting that when God poured out the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 at Pentecost, the manifestation of spoken words and unlearned languages resulted. It seems that what He was filling the Believers with (the Holy Spirit) was supposed to overflow out of their hearts and affect their communication.

The Lord is still able today to pour out His Spirit in our hearts so that our words can bring glory and honor to Him!

