

Taming the Impossible to Tame

-- By Les Dennis

One of my childhood memories is of going to the circus when it came to town. The lion tamer always intrigued me because he could make the scary old lion jump through hoops and do all kinds of things. As I got older my interests changed and I did not go to many circuses. I was more interested in marinas with the trained dolphins, but I was just as amazed by the dolphins as a teenager as I was by the lion tamers when I was a child. As the years went by, I saw other creatures being tamed: parrots, chickens, dogs, cats, snakes, and many other animals as well. Just as James 3:7 tells us, mankind has tamed every kind of animal.

The most amazing thing is not that man can tame the animals, but that even though he can tame the animals, he cannot tame himself. The tongue is an especially difficult member to tame. Actually, the tongue is impossible for man to tame. James 3:8 says, "But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Since we are required by law to carefully keep deadly poisons contained in a safe place, we should be just as careful with our tongues. Just as a little spark can start a huge forest fire, our little tongues can spark a church fight or destroy relationships. Church fights and splits are inevitable unless we as members and adherents submit our lives to the control of the Lord. In Romans 6, we are told to yield our members as servants of righteousness.

If we do not yield our members (including our tongues) as servants of righteousness, we will yield our members as servants of unrighteousness, with all the poison of our tongues unleashed upon our fellow believers. Clearly, the only solution to this problem is to submit ourselves to the Lord and allow him to control our tongues as well as our other members.

What should we do if people start to unleash the deadly poison of gossip in our presence and criticize a fellow believer? Our responsibility is to remind him/her to go to the person with whom they have the problem. This is very important if we do not wish to become an accessory to character assassination. If we remind one another of this great biblical principle, we can continue to have the sense of unity in the church that we have today. Let's all submit our tongues to the control of God, the only one who can control them.

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