

23. Here is the expanded translation of verse 4:

James 3:4 Consider the example of ships which are quite large and are propelled under the influence of fierce winds upon its sails, yet it is guided by the positioning of a very small rudder toward whatever direction the volition of the ship's pilot determines.
(EXT)

Principles:

1. The ship is the second example that James uses to address the power of the tongue, illustrated in verse 3 by the bit in a horse's mouth and in verse 4 by the rudder of a ship.
2. The horse is a large, strong, and yet trainable animal. We have noted quite a number of principles associated with the flexibility horses have in the learning process.
3. The horse is easily controlled by the bit and bridle. The second illustration is the ship whose rudder is small, especially by comparison to the boat it is tasked to guide.
4. James's major points in his illustration is that the tongue is small compared to the size of the human body just as the rudder is small compared to the size of the ship.
5. The bit in the horse's mouth is behind its tongue; the rudder of the ship is paltry by comparison to the ship it guides. When two people engage in disagreements the result can often lead to use of fisticuffs, arms, elbows, legs, knees, feet, and body slams.
6. Yet those tactics are usually employed one-on-one. Eventually the fight is over, one makes his point while the other nurses his wounds. There is yet another part of the human body that can do far worse damage and include an entire group of people.
7. Lasting damage to a congregation can rip apart its membership when one person uses his tongue to gossip, malign, judge, criticize, insult, or demean a fellow believer.
8. Sides are taken; some leave the church others separate but continue to attend; some agree with the accusations while others do not. Regardless of the responses, pro and con, the congregation suffers divisions that without the application of the Royal Law the body remains fractured by the use of an easily enunciated criticism of a fellow believer.



9. Therefore, the body of Christ, which makes up a congregation, is damaged by the verbal assault of one person. Sides are taken, lines are drawn, and doctrine takes a holiday if not a sabbatical.
10. The chaos caused is done by a simple but tremendously devastating remark, one that James critiques in:

James 1:21 Therefore, put away from yourself mental attitude sins that pollute the soul and all the excesses of an evil habit of mind, you must receive with humility the implanted word, which is empowered to deliver your souls from danger.

v. 22 But keep on becoming doers of the implanted Word, and not only hearers who deceive themselves due to self-induced stupidity.

v. 23 For if, and it is true, anyone is a hearer of the Word in the *noús* and not a doer from the *kardía*, such a person, is like a nobleman who looks contemplatively at his facial features in a mirror;

v. 24 for once he had continued to contemplate himself intently in the mirror and departed, he has the existing result of immediately disregarding what kind of man he habitually and regularly was.

v. 25 But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect law of freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer only, but a doer, this man shall acquire unalloyed happiness by the production of divine good. (EXT)

11. The most devastating thing a believer can do is to verbally gossip, criticize, or denigrate another believer. The Royal Law does not permit this which our study of the edification complex of the soul clearly taught.
12. This doctrine presented a foundation and seven advancing levels of spiritual growth that when accumulated and applied resulted in invisible impact for that believer.
13. The foundation is obviously salvation. There has to be a starting place and acquisition of divine viewpoint and advancement toward the understanding and use of the Royal Law and the Law of Freedom are developed by means of a process.



14. The obvious first level is spiritual growth under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. If inculcation of biblical guidelines, vocabulary, and doctrines does not follow, then the believer remains in self-induced stupidity.
15. Bible study requires some basic principles of how Scripture is organized. Every section of the Bible takes place in a certain historical period. These are categorized as dispensations.¹ The Old Testament has two of these time periods: (1) the times of the **Gentiles** and (2) the times of the nation and people of **Israel**. These are centered around the works and acts of God related to these two groups and are referred to as Theocentric.
16. The New Testament contains four time periods. The third and fourth time periods are: (3) the birth, life, and public ministry of Jesus Christ is known as the **Incarnation** found in the four Gospels, followed by (4) the Acts of the Apostles and the period of the **Church** covered primarily in the Epistles. The Gospels were completed in the past; the Church is taking place presently and will terminate at the Rapture of the Church, yet future noted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:51–57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Thessalonians 4:1–12 These are classified as Christocentric.
17. What follows these are two more time periods which take place in the future; (5) the **Tribulation** or the fulfilment of the prophesy of Daniel's seventieth heptad mentioned by the Archangel Gabriel to Daniel in Daniel 9:25–27, by Jesus in Matthew 24:9–26; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 14 and (6) the **Millennium**, which is the perfect kingdom of Christ, mentioned by the Lord in Matthew 24:27 and by Isaiah in Isaiah 10:21–22; 60:18–25 and Joel 3:18–21.
18. Knowing what time it is enables the believer in the Church Age to develop his inventory of ideas primarily from the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, the experiences of the apostles in the Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament. It is from these resources that the believer is able to develop, facilitate, and execute the gradual accumulation of the ten problem-solving devices.
20. During this spiritual advance the believer develops problem-solving devices 7 and 8: personal love for God followed by unconditional love for mankind. It is at this level that the believer is able to use his spiritual inventory to develop and execute the Royal Law.

¹ "A dispensation is a period of human history defined in terms of divine revelation. According to the Bible, history is a sequence of divine administrations. These consecutive eras reflect the unfolding of God's plan for mankind. They constitute the divine viewpoint of history and the theological interpretation of history. The doctrine of dispensations is the vehicle by which believers living at a specific time can orient to God's will, plan, and purpose for their lives" (R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church*, 2d ed., ed. Wayne F. Hill [Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1999], 3).



21. Once the problems associated with other people—both the heathen and the saved—the believer is freed up to concentrate on the blessings associated with spiritual freedom.
22. Spiritual freedom is the environment of spiritual autonomy and the enjoyment of the copacetic spiritual life. Freed from the lust to run other people's lives, to set them straight, achieve spiritual one-upsmanship, teach them a lesson, or relate these desires to others is now a thing of the past.
23. True spiritual freedom and true happiness is the environment that the believer enjoys when the working objects in his stream of consciousness counsel him to avoid mental-attitude and verbal sins regarding other believers.
24. Cut them slack. They may not have arrived at spiritual maturity as you may assume you have accomplished. They are who they are because of where they are in the development of their edification complex of the soul.
25. Maximum use of the Law of Freedom requires maximum use of forgiveness of others' failings and the willingness to pray for the alleged offender instead of calling them out.
26. Live and let live. Allow others room for error. Permit them time to grow in grace and recover from personal difficulties. Ignore what is none of your business. If it is your business, turn it over to the Lord for prosecution and stay out of His way.
27. The environment this believer's advance enjoys is the copacetic spiritual life and characterized by unalloyed happiness.
28. The ultimate advance is the lifestyle of the invisible hero. With full utilization of his spiritual inventory, this believer has become a star witness² for the Prosecution and in doing so has provided invisible historical impact in his life, in his generation, and in his accumulation of Nike Awards.
29. One of the primary assets in this advance is the believer's ability to curb his tongue. The tongue can be a sword that cuts deep into the reputation of others, ignites fuel for prolonged antagonisms, and accomplishes nothing spiritual.
30. Those who have conquered their tongues are pleasant to be around. They do not display any animosity toward others, and they personally enjoy life.
31. Those who cannot control their tongues are advancing toward reverse process reversionism by the influence of evil and promotion of the lie.

² "In legal proceedings, a star witness is a witness who provides major and crucial information in a criminal case. In some instances, a case may have several star witnesses, and their testimony may cinch a conviction or acquittal" (<https://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-star-witness.htm>).

