

Help Prevent Forest Fires

James 3:5

Introduction:

- A. Terrible forest fires: Yellowstone, California.
- B. Worse forest fires are set and fanned by the tongue.
 - 1. An unbridled tongue. (Jas. 1:27).
 - 2. An unruly tongue. (Jas. 3:8).
 - 3. A double tongue. (James 3:9-12)
 - 4. A judgmental tongue. (Jas. 4:11).
- C. Closely examine fires set and spread by tongue:

Discussion:

I. The Damage Done by Fires Set by the Tongue.

- A. To personal reputations.
 - 1. Identifies one with fools (Prov. 10:18,19; 14:16; 18:6, 7; 20:3; 29:11)
 - 2. Destroys good names. (cf. Donovan's statement).
- B. To personal relationships.
 - 1. Domestic. (Prov. 21:9, 19; 27:15)
 - 2. Fraternal. (Prov. 16:28; 17:9).
 - 3. General. (Prov. 26:20-28).
- C. To spiritual matters.
 - 1. Damages effectiveness of gospel. (1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:14,23-26).
 - a. Discourages weak and struggling Christians.
 - b. Damages work and reputations of elders, preachers, teachers, etc.
 - 2. Damages fellowship with God and brethren. (1 Pet. 3:8-12).

II. The Source of Fires Set by the Tongue.

- A. Hell. (V. 6).
- B. Heart. (Matt. 12:34,35).
 - 1. Hypocritical heart overflows :Double-tongue (1 Tim. 3:8), flattering words (Jude 16).
 - 2. Selfish heart overflows: Grumbling, complaining, contentions (Jude 16; cf. Rom. 2:9; Jas. 3:14,16).
 - 3. Angry, Envious, jealous, hateful heart overflows in hateful words – malicious gossip.

III. The Real Tragedy of Fires Set by the Tongue.

- A. Will account for every idle word. (Matt. 12:36).
- B. Will be condemned or justified by words. (Matt. 12:37).

Conclusion:

- A. Must neither ignite, fan nor fuel such fires with the tongue.
- B. Can help put out those already started.
 - 1. By refusing to spread the fire. (Prov. 26:20-21)
 - 2. By dealing firmly with those who do spread it. (cf. Prov. 25:23 KJV, Tit. 3:10).