

## Language Lessons:

In my language collecting, I've gathered a number of quotes, articles, excerpts, poems, et. al. that focus on the power, importance, danger, and delight of language.

(1) I wonder if language is our most precious/important gift? What do you think?

(2) What can you find to add to our language gatherings?

I want to share with you this excerpt from the Bible (it's a famous metaphor for the power of language). In doing this, however, I wanted to make it into a more complete essay, so I've written a title, introduction paragraph, and a conclusion paragraph to give you a model of a brief, but instructive essay. (as well as some important life skills)

(3) What connections can you discover among the title, introduction, body, and conclusion? Read this brief essay and answer the questions I've just raised,

(4) Write a five word summary of the paragraph, and after that we'll talk—if we dare!

### A Formidable Force

*“A word is dead when it is said/some say/I say it just begins to live/that day.” Poet, Emily Dickinson, wrote these words over one hundred years ago, and they are just as true today as they were then. Even thousands of years before that, James, an apostle, had elaborated on a similar idea—words can be an unwieldy power. They can be used wisely, but often can cause trouble as well.*

“...We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

With the tongue we praise our Lord and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing...This should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? Can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water...”

*The prevalent pollution and poison that come from the careless use of words create pain and danger for both individuals and society. Careless words seldom die, so we must guard even the trifles of language with sagacity and reverence. In fact, these words we have just read are now alive, and hopefully will help us change the course of destructive floods of language that threaten to drown us, and help us provide a spring of fresh water for the world each time we open our mouths.*