



Jeffrey Learns a Lesson

By Jennifer L. Betts



It was the night before Christmas. A mother and father were at their wit's end. Their smallest child was a good boy for the most part, but they couldn't get Jeffrey to quit using foul language. At first, his siblings had thought it was a bit funny, but now that he was getting older, it was quite a problem. The mother and father just didn't know what to do, so they said a prayer.

Filled with renewed hope, father started wrapping up the new Bibles that they had bought each of the children for Christmas. As father was beginning to wrap up Jeffrey's, the verse from James 3:2 suddenly came to mind, as if God had whispered it right in his ear. With a smile, father grabbed a bookmark, marking that passage for Jeffrey. Wrapping it in shiny red paper, father smiled to mother.

With hearts and minds at ease, mother and father slipped off to bed. Christmas morning, the little red present was the last for Jeffrey to open. After watching his siblings open their bibles, he tore into the paper with a renewed vigor. Gently stroking the cover, he looked curiously at the bookmark.

"Jeffery's has a bookmark," said Page, Jeffrey's older sister.

Helping him flip the to page, she read aloud.

All of us do many wrong things. But if you can control your tongue, you are mature and able to control your whole body. James 3:2, Good News Translation

Jeffery deeply contemplated this passage for a few minutes. You could almost see the lightbulb go on over his head. With a smile, his parents turned to watch their other children enjoying their presents, thinking that young Jeffrey's swearing problem would finally be solved.

"Jeffery, what are you doing?" Page asked after a few seconds.

Mother and father turned to see Jeffrey pulling on his tongue with all his might. His little face was actually turning an alarming shade of purple with the effort.

"I'm working on con'toling me' tongue." Jeffrey slurred looking at his sister incredulously, "Duhhh...."

Page laughed at her brother, rolling her eyes.

"You're not literally supposed to control your tongue, Jeffrey!" Page said in exasperation, "You're supposed to stop swearing."

"Oh," Jeffrey said letting go of his tongue with a blush, "That makes way more sense. I didn't know how holding my tongue was supposed to make me more mature at all."

At that the entire family had a good laugh.

Lesson: While controlling what you say can be hard, if you work on speaking in a wholesome manner, it can help you to behave in other areas as well.

