



**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 body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**

*James 3:5-6*

### **Words of Mass Destruction: The Tongue**

The High Park fire was a wildfire in the mountains west of Fort Collins, Colorado. It was caused by a lightning strike and was first detected on the morning of June 9, 2012. The High Park fire burned over 87,000 acres and is the second-largest fire in recorded Colorado history by area burned. It destroyed 259 homes.

Suppressing the fire cost \$38 million. Over 2,000 firefighters, 7 helicopters, 103 fire engines, and 11 bulldozers were used. It took three weeks to get the fire under control. The insured losses totaled \$113 million.

The fire started with a small spark, caused huge destruction, and was not easily controlled. So too our tongues. It is sad to see a once beautiful landscape destroyed by fire. It is heart-wrenching to look back on the fiery destruction our little tongue has caused. Reputations have been scorched. Relationships have been singed. The destruction our tongues has caused is fueled, not by dry grass or dead trees, but by the evil desires in our hearts. For all of this, the fire of God's wrath should destroy our tongues—and us.

Smoky the Bear has told you, "Only you can prevent forest fires." That is not true when it comes to the forest fires caused by your tongue. A Christian needs some help. You need a Savior who has perfectly used his tongue in wise ways. You need a Savior who comes to you with words of forgiveness that snuff out your guilt. You need the Holy Spirit, who now dwells in you and gives you the desire to control your tongue and prevent it from destroying others.

**PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to use my tongue to speak forth good and helpful things. For that is your will for me, and you have given me a new nature—and a new tongue—to do just that. Amen.**