

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 1 - The Monster in Your Mouth (June 5, 2011)

James 3



OUR SUMMER TRAVELS – This is a tentative schedule of our summer study. The teacher is very open to suggestions, illustrations, clean humor, and personal examples you may have to contribute to making this class especially helpful for our growth in grace. Our study makes use of Paul Tripp’s *War of Words* and Joseph Stowell’s *The Weight of Your Words* as well as other resources.

June 5	James 3 – The Monster in Your Mouth
June 12	Beginning of the Great Word War
June 19	The Heart--Mouth Connection
June 26	Hope for Our Tongues
July 3	Our Words Are Not Our Own
July 10	Redeemed Talk
July 17	Deceiving Words
July 24	Hurtful Words
July 31	Arrogant Words
August 7	Angry Words
August 14	Gripping Words
August 21	Crude and Rude Words
August 28	Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver

Surely one of the hardest areas in which to glorify God is with our tongue! James is right. No man can tame the tongue. Have you ever said, “My tongue gets me in trouble all the time?” I have. When’s the last time you said something thoughtlessly, or sarcastically, and later (or immediately) regretted it? Our study this summer is to help us grow in glorifying God with our speech. We need to learn how to control our tongues. We need to see the “heart-mouth” connection, as Jesus said in Luke 6:45

“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

Think about it – most of life happens on the level of our tongues. Relationships thrive or dive by words and the heart that drives those words. Warren Wiersbe says, “When Christ is Lord of your heart, He is also Lord of your tongue.”

MEMORIZE EPHESIANS 4:29

For our study this summer I want to encourage us all to memorize a few key passages on our words, tongue, communication. This one is probably the best tongue-check in the Bible.

L N U W P F Y M, B O S A W A I G F E A T T N O T M, S T I W G G T T W H.

JAMES 3 – THE CLASSIC PASSAGE ON THIS MONSTER IN OUR MOUTH

Let’s go to James 3, the classic passage on the tongue. Then we’ll go back and pick up on the Great Word War that began in Genesis 3 and is still raging these many thousands of years later. James gives us six pictures of the tongue: a rudder, a bit for a horse’s mouth, fire, poisonous beast, fountain, and a tree. We’re told there are some 100,000,000

microscopic critters living on that hunk of muscle between our teeth. By looking at your tongue a doctor can tell a lot about our physical condition. Justin Martyr wrote: “By examining the tongue...Christians find out the diseases of the soul.”

- **3:1 God holds teachers to a stricter judgment.** See 1 Timothy 3:8. For preachers and teachers, truly, who is sufficient to stand before human beings and proclaim God’s Word? Our sufficiency is of God.

- **3:2 Controlling our speech is a mark of maturity.** That’s troubling.

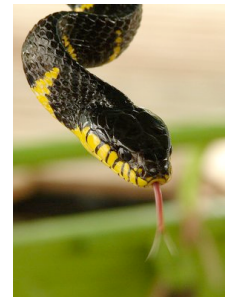
- **3:3-5 Our tongue is small but powerful – a bit, a rudder, a flame.** Proverbs 18:21. Think of the deadly tongue of Hitler compared to the life-giving words of Christ! For every word in Mein Kampf 125 lives were destroyed.



- **3:6 Our tongue can bring our entire world to ruins.** It is set driven by hell itself! Consider the destructive power of the tongue in marriages, families, on the job, in politics, yes, even in churches! What are some of the destructive sins of the tongue? (Slander, lies, gossip, put downs, criticism, etc.) Consider the power of the media, which seems to thrive on gossip and slander and anything negative. It sells.

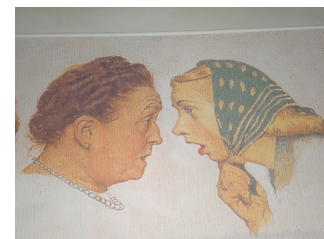
- **3:7-8 Our tongue in its untamed nature is a wild and deadly beast.** As a restless evil – it seeks to harm others. As a deadly poison – it has the venom to murder relationships. It is like that “two-step” snake in Viet Nam.

No snake kills with more ruthless efficiency than the many-banded krait, which dwells in the jungles of India and Southeast Asia. Drop for drop, its venom is the deadliest of any land serpent’s, apart from a few rare species found only in the outback of Australia. One bite of the krait carries enough concentrated toxin to kill two dozen grown men. American soldiers during the war in Vietnam called it the “two-step snake,” in the belief that its venom is so lethal that if it bites you, you will fall dead after taking just two steps. That’s an exaggeration, but the bite of the many-banded krait is astonishingly potent.



And yet one poisonous word can kill a relationship instantly!

- **3:9-12 The tongue has incredible power for hypocrisy.** Regardless of what we say to God, it’s what we say about other people that demonstrates what’s in our hearts. Here you have the inevitable “root and fruit” or “heart-tongue” connection. What comes out of the pitcher is what’s in the pitcher. If the roots are crabapple, it won’t bear peaches. What does being “double-tongued” mean? No this (picture of split tongue). It’s pure hypocrisy – saying what people want to hear.



“I didn’t mean it. After all, they were only words.” Maybe to you, but not to the target of your verbal bullets. Joseph Stowell confessed, “I don’t know about you, but I would much rather learn to control my tongue than to see harm come to others because of careless words.”

WE NEED GOD’S HELP – Ephesians 4:29-30!

We need Christ to control our hearts with His Spirit if we are ever going to learn to control these little monsters. “If God rules my heart, my tongue will be in His hands for His purposes.” Let’s conclude by focusing on these two verses to help us control our tongues.

1) Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, 2) but only such a word as is good for edification 3) according to the need of the moment, 4) that it may give grace to those who hear. 5) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:29-30

#1 Become aware of any words that are hurtful or destructive to others. That word “unwholesome” is used of rotten fruit, rotten meat, anything revolting. What do your words “taste” like to others?

#2 Become committed to using words that are designed to build up others. Joe Stowell tells the story about a young boy whose music teacher encouraged him to sing in the choir. A little later she was replaced by a new music teacher. When he heard this young student sing he said, “Who told you you could sing?” It took eight years for that young man to ever try singing again.

#3 Become aware of using your words to meet specific needs of people in your life.

#4 Become committed to using words that give grace to others – words that are encouraging, motivating, appreciative. Could right now look at your spouse, or your son or daughter, and express with words 20 things you appreciate about them?

#5 Be very aware that God’s Spirit within us is grieved when we selfishly use words to tear others down. One of the great truths I hope we will all learn this summer in this study – Our words do not belong to us. They belong to God.

Think about all the relationships in your life. Are your words building or hurtful with:

Your Children?

Your spouse?

Your extended family or In-laws?

Your fellow workers or your employer?

Your friends?

Other believers – those with whom you serve?

Strangers who make life difficult for you?

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 2 – Beginning of the Great Word War
Genesis 2-3



When's the last time you had a Word War with your kids? Or with your spouse? Or refused to talk to try to win a losing battle. I knew a couple who drove pretty much to Florida on the tail of a tiff with saying hardly a word the entire trip! Some of you remember the Honeymooners with Ralph and Alice? "One of these days, Alice, right in the kisser!"

Here are several examples of the Word War from Tripp's book:

"I can't believe what my son just said to me."

"I wish our family could go through an entire day without someone yelling."

"You always have to have the last word." "No I don't." "Yes you do." "No I don't."

"He talks so sweetly to me when we're in public."

How did we get into this Word War, anyway. Well, it goes back a long way, all the way back to the beginning, when God said... Yep, words began with God. God spoke, then Satan spoke, and then Adam and Eve spoke. God spoke truth, Satan spoke lies, and the moment sin entered the human race, things got ugly fast. Almost immediately you have words turning into weapons. "It's her fault." "It's his fault." "It's the devil's fault." Bottom line, "God, it's your fault for giving this woman to me." So let's go back and see how this whole thing got started...

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD SPOKE

Before Genesis 3, all was peaceful, truthful, and helpful. They were God's Words!

Major principle of communication: The only way for us to know God and one another is through words. We reveal ourselves through words and we learn of others through words. So words are important; God created us to talk. He talks. He even sent the Word to reveal Himself to us. And we have the Word of God so that we might know His plan. Think about the power of words in Genesis 1-2

Genesis 1:3 And God said...

Genesis 1:26 And God said, "Let us make man in our image."

Genesis 1:28 And God said, "Be fruitful and multiply.... I have given you...."

Genesis 2:16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree...."

Genesis 2:18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone...."

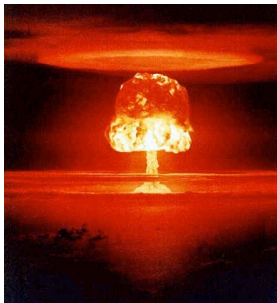
Imagine if God had not spoken to us through the Scriptures? What would we know? "God's words set boundaries and give freedom. His words create life and bring death. God created talk.... Words reveal, define, explain, and shape." And one of the most important truths from our summer study is this: Our words do not belong to us. They belong to God. Be careful how you use them.

GOD CREATED YOU TO TALK

The ability to communicate is one of the most obvious distinctions of our being made in God's image. God made us for relationships with Him and others, and words are the fuel that nurtures those relationships. Man's first recorded words are at the heart of human relationship, marriage. Genesis 2:23 "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." And the "talk and listen" relationship began. As Paul Tripp notes: "Want to learn? Listen and talk. Want to have a relationship? Worship? Parent your child? Be a blessing to others?"

SATAN'S WORDS

But let's get ready for the Great Word War. We no longer live in a Genesis 2 world. Instead of using words to bless, build up, encourage, express appreciation, share knowledge and listen for understanding, we use words to promote our own selfish little kingdom, and our words are the cause of much heartache and suffering. In Job 19:2 Job complained about his friends' counsel: "How long will you torment me, and crush me with words?" Let's see how Satan's talk in Genesis 3 blew up the beauty and harmony of Genesis 2 talk.



3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

- God's authority was challenged for the first time. Before this, everything and everyone was in sweet submission to God's will and authority. But now God's authority is challenged, and "the world would never be the same again." (Tripp, p. 20). Whenever

we speak out of selfish anger or slander, we assume we are "God" over our words.

3:2-5 And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- Satan's words interpreted life completely differently from God. God said one thing, and Satan said the exact opposite. Was God really good, or was God withholding good? Our words interpret life all the time, and as sinners we tend to interpret selfishly. "You make me so angry!" Is that a godly interpretation?
- A lie was spoken for the first time. Trust in God's Word and character is undermined. Satan is a liar and the father of lies. Here are the roots of all deceit, lies, manipulation, half truths, false witness, all the sinful attacks on truth and integrity. This is big, because one of the leading characteristics of those populating the lake of fire for eternity are liars.

MAN'S WORDS IN A FALLEN WORLD - Genesis 3:6-13

3:6-13 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

For the first time people spoke against each other. How quickly sin takes root and bears fruit! Adam doesn't stand with Eve, protect her, plead her case. He just blames her. And thus began the blame game that is being played out probably in every marriage and relationship to some degree. "If you hadn't _____ then I wouldn't have _____."

But, worse, this is the first time people used words to accuse God Himself. Actually, when we blame others or even circumstances, we are covertly saying, "God, it's your fault." I'd be a perfect parent if God had given me better kids. I'd be happy if _____ was different.

THE BATTLE IS ON

No wonder James characterizes our tongue as a wild, destructive beast! From this Genesis 3 launch into the Great Word War, we've been fighting word battles every since. Words have caused a world of hurt. Here are some Proverbs that depict the power of talk, both good and evil:

- Flattery seduces into sexual sin – Prov. 7: 21
With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.
- Overtalk easily slips into sin – Prov. 10:19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
- Words can stab or heal – Prov. 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- Words easily destroy friendships – Prov. 16:28 A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.



- A fool chatters on and on – Prov. 18:2 A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.
- A quarrelsome wife makes life extra hard – Prov. 21:9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.



- A quick-tempered man burns down relationships – Prov. 26:21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.
- Talking without thinking is beyond foolish – Prov. 29:20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

AGAIN, WE NEED HELP!

God designed us to use words to nurture and enrich relationships, and Satan twisted words into weapons of lies and hatred, and we follow suit.

“We have laid traps without mouths. We have seduced with our words. Our talk has stirred up dissension. We have said too much and spoken in haste. Our words have been reckless. We have given in to gossip and in our anger our words have been malicious. We have been quarrelsome. At times, we have delighted to air our own opinions. We have given in to mocking humor. We have betrayed the confidence of others with our words.” (Tripp, War of Words, pp. 29-30)

We need forgiveness AND strength to change! How have you been challenging God’s authority? Buying into the lies of Satan that God isn’t good? Blaming or quietly attacking those closest to you?

Christ came into this world to redeem us from the evil of our mouths. Help for our words comes as we...

- Honestly confess to God about how selfish we have been with our words.
- Embrace Christ and His work on the cross as the only means of forgiveness.
- Acknowledge our weakness and struggle with our words and need of Christ’s daily sufficient grace – 2 Corinthians 12:9

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 3 – The Heart-Mouth Connection

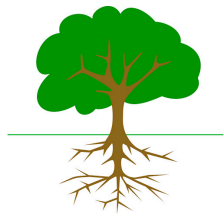
Luke 6:45

(Much of this lesson is from Paul Tripp's book *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*)



Paul Tripp tells the story of being at a family reunion as a young boy when one of his relatives who imbibed excessively in alcoholic beverages. As his tongue became looser, it became cruder. Paul's mother finally grabbed Paul and his brother Mark, loaded them in the car, and took off. She drew a life principle from the situation: "There is nothing that comes out of a drunk that wasn't there in the first place." Our hearts control our words. Our tongues are connected securely to our inner man, where we think, desire, choose. The Great Word War becomes a war for control of our heart!

Luke 6:43-45 For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.



THE ROOT AND FRUIT PHENOMENON Certain kinds of roots produce certain kinds of fruit. Apple roots don't produce peaches or pears – they produce apples. Word problems reveal heart problems. Where do those nasty words come from? Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure!" Nasty fruit comes from nasty roots.

Nasty words come from nasty heart problems. We need heart surgery!

The heart is the real you. When we are getting to know someone, we aren't getting to know the size of their ears, or the shape of their nose. We are getting to know their heart. And when we talk, or hear people talk, we are dealing with the heart. The heart is the inner person where you really live, think, desire, choose, decide, value, ponder, respond, worship.

Paul Tripp tells about making a deal with a homeowner from when they rented. He agreed to do yard work for a lower rent. She agreed. But she expected more than Paul wanted to give. She'd get out in her robe raking, sending Paul a visual message. Paul stood at the window one day and said, "If she thinks I'm going to rush out there and rake for her, she's nuts. I'm going to rake on my own time or not at all." His son heard Paul's little rant and quickly ran out, and with hands on hips said, "My dad says if you think he's going to rush out here and rake for you, you're nuts." Paul's words were directly related to his heart. Our words always are!

THE GREAT WORD WAR IS WON IN OUR HEARTS

“Lasting change must always travel through the pathway of my heart. Christ radically transforms people by radically transforming their hearts.” Paul gives us three helpful principles:

#1 - People and situations do not determine our fruit. They provide the occasion for our hearts to be revealed.

THE TEA BAG PHENOMENON If you put a tea bag in a cup and pour steaming water into the cup, the tea will begin to flavor and color the water. Our hearts are like that tea bag. When immersed in a heated situation, what’s in our hearts will be released (Jim Berg, *Taking Time to Change*). The people and circumstances in our lives don’t cause sinful words to come from our hearts. They provide the occasion for our heart to express itself with either godly or sinful reactions. No one makes us sin with our tongue. Our mouth speaks from what fills our hearts, as Jesus said:



Matthew 12:34 For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

#2 - Lasting change must take place through the heart. Fruit change is the result of root change.

#3 - The heart is our target in personal growth and ministry, including our words.

THE PITCHER PHENOMENON What’s in the pitcher comes out. If there’s water in the pitcher, water pours out of the pitcher. Milk? Milk. Gasoline? Gasoline. What’s in the heart comes out. If there’s deceit in the heart, lies come out. Disgruntled? Critical words. Anger? Angry words. Pride? Gossip, slander, self-promoting words.



Proverbs 15:2b But the mouth of fools spouts/pours/gushes folly.

JAMES 4 GETS TO THE HEART OF THE GREAT WORD WAR

Whom do we blame when we spout anger? She makes me so... He drives me... She pushes my buttons... Sitting in traffic, we can get all steamed, gripe and complain. Look over and see a lady all happy, taking the time to put on her make up. The difference? The heart. You may talk to one person and they want you to quickly get finished, while the other person assures you of their interest and wants you to go into even more detail. What’s the difference? The heart. That’s where James 4 takes us...

4:1-2a What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit



murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel.

What causes quarrels and conflicts? Our pleasures, lusts, or desires. We're not getting what we want. Or we're wanting something too much and will sin to get it.

4:2b-3 You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Why don't we receive what we ask for? We want God to please us, give us what we want. Our desires are ruling our hearts, not God's desires.

4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Why does God call this adultery? Because God made our hearts for Himself and here our desires are ruling our hearts instead of Him.

4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

What is God jealous for? Our inner being, the Spirit ruling our hearts. God is jealous for us the way a parent is jealous for his child's good.

4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

What does God's grace do for our hearts? It conquers our selfish desires and brings our hearts under His rule. Grace through the gospel transforms the heart.



4:7-10 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

What is our practical strategy for winning this war in the heart? Humility – submission, resisting, drawing near, cleansing, repenting, and humbling ourselves.

Then we have to get deal personally with our own lives, washing our hands, purifying our hearts, repenting over a selfish, adulterous heart, and humble ourselves under God's authority. He'll give us grace as we do.

So, how is your heart exposed in your words or at least your thoughts in these situations:

When someone is going 30 in a 45 MPH speed zone on a two lane highway with a yellow line??

When someone hinders you from being on time?

When you were expecting a warm sun shiny vacation and it rained every day?

When your AC unit breaks down in the middle of summer or you find out your hot water heater isn't working as you turn on the faucet for a shower or you bite down on something hard and a piece of your tooth cracks off?

Remember: Whatever rules your heart will control your behavior – the root and fruit, pitcher, and tea bag.

Remember: Genuine change always takes place through the heart.

Pray: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 4 – God’s Mission for Our Words



God has a mission for our words – to do His work and bring Him glory. We are speaking for the King. He is the source, the standard, and the goal of all our talk. Christ Himself came speaking for His heavenly Father...

Isaiah 50:4 The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.

Paul sets a God-given agenda for our words in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14...

Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.... And we urge you brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KING – 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Ambassadors speak in behalf of another. They represent their country, government, King. You are an ambassador for Jesus Christ in this foreign land.

We are here to persuade people about our King – vv. 11-13

Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, that you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearance, and not in heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

What does our talk usually focus on? Us! Yet God’s mission for our words is ultimately about Him and His glory.

We are here to be motivated by Christ’s love exposed in the gospel – vv. 14-17

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

What is our talk usually about? Us and our issues! Yet God’s mission for our words is to express Christ’s love and the power of the gospel to change lives. Our words should reflect this.

We are here to persuade people to be reconciled to God in Christ – vv. 18-6:1

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we

might become the righteousness of God in Him. And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--

The most important subject for our talk is not about this world and all it's issues and troubles, but about God's work in this world of reconciling sinners to Himself through the gospel. Notice all the speaking words in these verses: a ministry of reconciliation, the word of reconciliation, God entreating through us, we beg you, we urge you.

SPEAKING FOR THE KING – Philippians 2:3-5

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

Here are several checks on whether or not our talk is representing the King well:

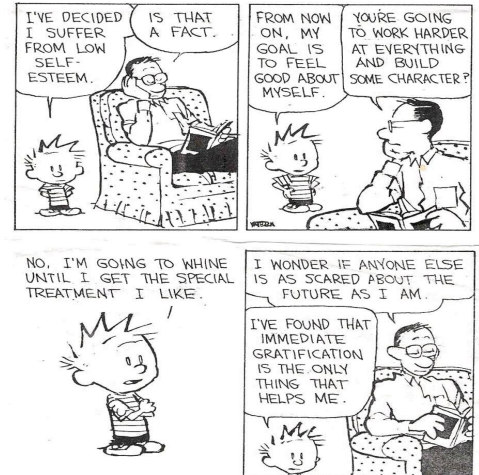
Is your talk free of selfishness or empty conceit?

Is your talk full of humility of mind regarding others as more important than yourself?

Is your talk free of merely personal interests?

Is your talk full of the interests of others?

Is your talk reflecting the mind and Spirit of Christ? Philippians 2:5-8



CHRISTIAN AMBASSADOR, YOU HAVE BEEN SENT BY THE KING INTO FOREIGN TERRITORY TO SPEAK FOR HIM



HOPE FOR FULFILLING YOUR MISSION

If you are like most of us, your talk has more often exposed you as an ambassador of your own agenda rather than Christ's. If we played an audio of your words this past week, what would we hear?

We need hope for our tongues. Here are eleven practical checkpoints to succeed in your mission:

Don't give in to dead-end regret – God knows all about those dumb, thoughtless, even cruel words, but God is in the forgiveness business.

Let the gospel control your heart and your mouth. The gospel gives us all we need to move forward. Not only does God forgive us, but He gives us all the strength, power, wisdom we need. We can glorify Christ with our words.

Check your fruit. What effect are your words having on others? Encouragement, care, love, forgiveness, joy? Or discouragement, bitterness, disgruntled, anger, irritation?

Look at your roots. Luke 6:45, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” Our hearts control our words. Who is ruling your heart, God or you?

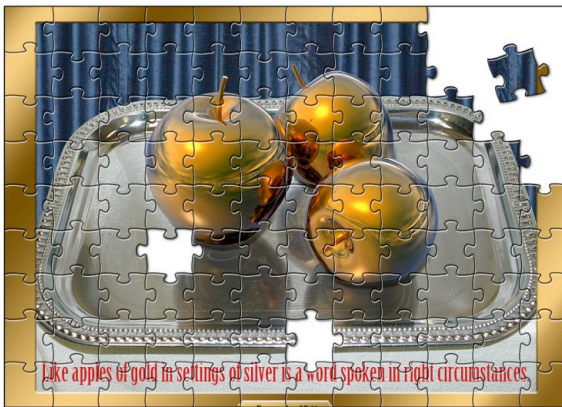
Seek forgiveness. Proverbs 28:13 says if we try to cover our sins, we won’t prosper, but if we confess and forsake them, we’ll find mercy. Don’t quickly try to justify yourself with these mental gymnastics: “I was just emphasizing my point” or “She drives me crazy” or “I just wasn’t myself” or “It’s just one of those days” or insert your favorite excuse for covering your sins of the tongue.

Question: Do you have specific sins of the tongue you need to confess?

Freely extend forgiveness. Someone said something that caught you crosswise, and now you are nursing a grudge. Quickly ask God to forgive you (surrendering any right for revenge or payback) and then just as quickly extend forgiveness to the person who seeks it from you. “There is no greater impediment to change than the unwillingness to seek and grant forgiveness.” See Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13.

Put on new ways of talking. Change must follow repentance and forgiveness. And change hasn’t taken place until change has taken place (Paul Tripp). How do you need to change the way you talk? This includes words, tones, motives, timing. As we know, it’s often not what we say but how we say it that carries an offense and needs changing.

Question: What communication habits have you developed that Christ wants to change?



Purposefully shape your words. Look for opportunities to frame your words of gold in settings of silver (Proverbs 25:11). Determine to be encouraging and be prepared every day to bring blessing even to those difficult people in your life. Don’t be overcome by evil talk, but overcome evil talk with good talk (from Romans 12:14, 15, 21) From *Unbroken*, in spite of how horribly the Japanese treated the American POWs, as soon as they were freed, they felt forgiveness for the Japanese and gave them good words and supplies.

Ponder your words. Proverbs 15:28, The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. This is the opposite of “open mouth, insert foot.” How often have you wished you could bring back hastily spoken words? “I wish I hadn’t spoken so quickly.” Apply this to email. Once it’s sent, there’s no retrieving it! Remember the story about gossip and the feathers?

A man in a small village was a terrible gossip, always telling stories about his neighbors, even if he didn't know them. Wanting to change, he visited the Rabbi for advice. The Rabbi instructed him to buy a fresh chicken at the local market and bring it back to him (the Rabbi) as quickly as possible, plucking off every single feather as he ran. Not one feather was to remain. The man did as he was told, plucking as he ran and throwing the feathers every which way until not a feather remained. He handed the bare chicken over to the Rabbi, who then asked the man to go back and gather together all the feathers he had plucked and bring them back. The man protested that this was impossible as the wind must have carried those feathers in every direction and he could never find them all. The Rabbi said, "That's true.

And that's how it is with gossip. One rumor can fly to many corners, and how could you retrieve it? Better not to speak gossip in the first place!" And the Rabbi sent the man home to apologize to his neighbors, and to repent.

Embrace your weakness. We need help with these tongues of ours! Paul wasn't afraid to confess his weakness, because Christ's grace is sufficient in our weakness. We need Christ's daily grace/inner strength to control our talk. By the way, we're not hiding anything from Him. He already knows our weakness and desperate need of His forgiveness and strength.

Keep the Devil off your turf. Ephesians 4:27 literally says, "Stop giving the devil a place to stand." Satan loves to use our talk to divide and destroy. And angry words and lingering resentment are his delight. Some of us clam up in sinful silence, and others blow up in sinful reactions. V. 26 says don't let the sun set on your anger. We keep him at bay by heart honesty (confessing) and heart humility (willing to listen).

WE REPRESENT CHRIST IN THIS WORLD WITH OUR TALK.

CHRIST'S GRACE IS SUFFICIENT TO HELP OUR TALK IN THIS FOREIGN LAND.

Biblical Communication – Write out each verse(s) and how it applies to effective communication in your life.

<p>Proverbs 12:18</p> <p>Application:</p>	<p>Proverbs 12:25</p> <p>Application:</p>
<p>Proverbs 13:3</p> <p>Application:</p>	<p>Proverbs 15:1</p> <p>Application:</p>
<p>Proverbs 16:23-24</p> <p>Application:</p>	<p>Proverbs 16:27</p> <p>Application:</p>

Biblical Communication – Write out each verse(s) and how it applies to effective communication in your life.

Proverbs 17:27	Proverbs 18:13
Application:	Application:
Proverbs 18:17	Proverbs 25:11-12
Application:	Application:
Proverbs 25:24	Proverbs 29:20
Application:	Application:

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 5 – Our Words Are Not Our Own



Do you agree with this statement: “Our words are the principle tool God uses in the work He does through us.” Why or why not? No wonder there is so much about communication in the Bible. We need the redeeming work of Christ, the sanctifying power of the Spirit, the explicit teaching and counsel of God’s Word to help us win this war. Winning this Great Word War means refusing to let our words be driven by selfish desires but rather communicating with God’s purposes in view. That’s where Galatians 5 will help us.

Recognize how powerfully destructive words can be – v. 15

But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed (destroyed) by one another.

We can use words like a gun slinger shooting willy nilly as we gallop through life, often leaving some level of hurt or death in our path. Do you see the destruction here?

Romans 3:13-14 Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Someone has come up with a couple dozen destructive communication tactics in this Great Word War. Can you explain or illustrate each one?

Side swiping	Lobbing labels	Using child shields
Character assassinating	Mind reading	Negative comparisons
Cluster bombing	Prophetic putdowns	I’m the expert here
Blasting away	Sarcastic belittling	I-O-U (Getting even)
Unilateral assault	Excusing	Verbal hand grenades
Pulling rank	Quitting	Using witnesses
Over talking	Pulling the martyr card	Questioning sanity
Gunny sacking	Reminding of money	Returning fire

Here’s the thing – our words influence others. How many comments can you remember that your dad or mother or some important person in your life made. Why do you still remember them? So we must remember how encouraging words can be, but also how destructive words can be. Picture your words “biting and devouring” other people. What a gruesome, yet true pictures. How false the ditty: Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me. Can you think of someone whose life you have influenced noticeably by your words?

Matthew 12:36 “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.”

Your identity in Christ releases you from bondage to sin to freedom to please God – v. 13, 24

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.... And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

What easily provokes you? What “pushes your buttons?” When do you “come unglued?” Imagine a family scenario that might ignite your anger. This passage, and this truth assures us that we have God-given grace and power in the face of provocation (as much as we want to insist we had every reason for giving them a piece of our mind we really couldn’t afford to lose). Notice two things in these verses:



Why did Christ set us free (v. 13)? Not to indulge our selfish passions.

What happened in our identity with Christ (v. 24)? Our sinful nature was crucified with Him, so that our bondage to sin was broken forever. I am no longer a slave to sin, regardless of how easily we still slip back into it. Here’s what we need to receive by faith – we are new creatures in Christ, we have died to our old sinful nature, so we have the power to say no to our selfish passions and desires. Passions and desires are simply those inner drives to have our own way and blast away at anyone who stands in our way! We are tempted to strike back at those we are meant to serve in order to satisfy ourselves.

Paul tells the story of John, who came home one day to discover his wife had emptied the house and left a note with the number of her lawyer. She shortly had secured custody of their children. How would you respond if you were John? How could these truths about your identity with Christ make a difference?

One Saturday a young acquaintance called Paul. He was about to commit suicide. When Paul arrived and tried to minister the gospel, he interrupted with, “You’re not going to trot out that stuff again, are you? Don’t you have anything new to say?” What would you say?

Our words are influential, they are not our own, and self-indulgent talk never accomplishes God’s purpose!

Use your words to serve others in love – vv. 13-14

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Our words are not our own, they belong to God, and God calls us to use them to serve others in love. We’ve already seen the put off in this passage – put off our selfish desires. God’s will is clearly what? To serve others in love. How does this affect our speech? Our talk should be loving and serving. And Paul couldn’t be stronger about God’s will – serving others in love fulfills the “entire law!”

Serving others in love does not mean being a doormat to everyone else’s agenda. It does mean, though, speaking for another person’s highest good.

Ephesians 4:29, our key verse, explains clearly how to lovingly serve others with our words:

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Corrupting words tear others down.

Building words assist others in specific needs.

Grace-filled words encourage others to find God's answers for their needs.



Spirit-filled words nurture the character of Christ – vv. 22-23

Evaluate your words in the mirror of the fruit of the Spirit. Are my words loving? Joyful? Peace-making? Patient? Kind? Good? Faith-filled? Gentle? Self-controlled?

God gives us words to help restore others in their daily struggle with sin – 6:1-2

Galatians 6:1-2 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

We all are prone to wander – get caught in a trespass.

God wants to use every believer as a restorer – this is not an “elite” spiritual corps.

Our words aren't ours but God's, to be used to help bear one another's burdens.

Tripp concludes chapter 12, “What radical revival, reconciliation, and restoration would result if we carried this call into every relationship in our lives!”

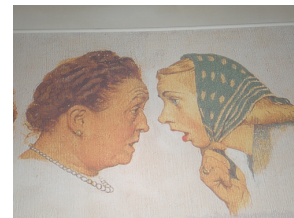
What are your verbal battlefields where you tend to forget our words are not our own?

What fruit of the Spirit most needs to be more evident in your communication?

In which of your relationships do you need to use your words as a restorer? Will you?

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 6 – Redeemed Talk



Before we get into some of the typical sins of the tongue, let's get some hope and direction for our words. Just like we are responsible for our actions and thoughts, we are responsible for our words. That means we have to deliberately choose words that please God. And that isn't always easy. Not by a long shot! Proverbs emphasizes pondering our words, refraining from talking too freely, and restraining our words.

Paul relates an experience of losing it with his words. His son had looked him straight in the face and lied to him. How could he? Paul was angry and felt completely justified. When his son came home he was ready to be God's agent of wrath for such a bald-faced lie. Paul was steaming. But his wife intervened and helped Paul to see the battle of sin raging in his own heart. He needed God's grace for his own indwelling sin. We are so easily taken captive by sinful desires. This is why we must choose our words and be intentionally redemptive in our talk.

Before his son came home Paul had...

- Confessed his need to God.
- Acknowledged the sufficiency of God's grace to him.
- Choose to refuse to let sin continue.
- Thanked God for the opportunity to be an ambassador of His grace with his words.

Ephesians 4 guides us in being redemptively intentional with our words, or choosing our words wisely.

Choose to speak with biblical truth – vv. 14-15

*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.*

Our words need to be informed with biblical truth. God's truth gives us the wisdom to make sense out of life. Colossians 3:16 urges us to let God's Word dwell in us richly so we can communicate His wisdom to others:

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

We should ask ourselves – how does biblical truth apply to this person's situation?

What does God want this person to learn about Him, his love, grace, will, truth?

What does God want this person to know about himself?

What does God want this person to know about others?

What is God calling this person to do?

Choose to speak with godly restraint – vv. 25-27

*Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE of you, WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another. **BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN**; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

How often we have said the wrong thing at the wrong time in the wrong place with the wrong attitude, driven by our sinful desires. We need the Holy Spirit's fruit of self-control. Words spoken under the self-control of the Spirit are:

Use honest words. God calls us to put off falsehood and speak truthfully with our neighbors. When we speak out of self-love or self-desire, we will use words for our own advantage, even if that means twisting the truthfulness of those words into falsehoods.



"WHEN HE YELLS AT YOU AND CALLS YOU BAD NAMES, HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?"

Use restrained words, not driven by sinful anger. Be angry but do not sin means we can actually control our words even under provocation. Some of us react in anger by blowing up – venting, “letting off steam,” letting words fly without self-control. Others of us clam up in anger and refuse to speak in a loving and restrained way. This is a direct route to bitterness. And many of us both blow up and clam up at different times.

Either way, we must have a “showdown before sundown” as one pundit put it. Don’t let that sun set on an angry spirit. The devil finds lots of opportunity in angry, resentful hearts. That’s where he grows the thorns of broken relationships. God is saying, “Don’t give your enemy a leg to stand on. Do everything you can to thwart his work.”

Choose to speak in a way that gives grace to your hearers – vv. 29-31.

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth – refuse to attack the other person. Wholesome talk uses words unselfishly.

But only such a word as is good for edification (building others up) – consider how the other person needs to be built up or helped.

According to the need of the moment – consider what this person needs to hear right now? How does God want to use you to help this person deal with specific problems he is facing.

That it (your words) may give grace to those who hear – consider how your words can bring hope and encouragement to this person, not just focusing on the problems. Grace would mean using words to help this person see God in their trial and know God has purpose and strength. It also speaks of motivation. To give grace means to nurture godly desire.

And don’t grieve the Holy Spirit – don’t use words that conflict with what the Spirit is doing in this person’s life. Loving and kind and self-controlled words, not angry, demanding, caustic words. The Spirit’s goal is to use you to help this person grow and become more like Christ. We grieve the Spirit when we conflict with His goal.

This means we must rid our speech of *all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*

Choose to speak words of forgiveness - vv. 32

And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

“There is no call of Christ more difficult than the call to forgive others as he has forgiven us.” Sinners tend to react sinfully when we are sinned against. Forgiveness means absorbing the cost of the offense and treating the person as if they had not sinned. We extend forgiveness because we have been forgiven far more.

Words of forgiveness mean asking forgiveness and giving forgiveness. Forgiveness is a promise, just like God has promised not to hold our sins against us. When we forgive others like God for Christ’s sake forgave us, we assure our offender, “I forgive you and I promise never to bring this issue up to myself, to you, or to others.” To refuse to forgive is to make the devil laugh and to grieve the Spirit of God (vv. 27,30)



But forgiving isn’t enough in our redeemed talk. We need to re-establish the relationship by positively blessing others, replacing hatred with love and malice with kindness. We don’t just decide to tolerate this person, but we give grace, we bless them with words of love, comfort, grace, patience, gentleness, and kindness.

Here is a beautiful picture of going beyond forgiveness to assuring of our love and acceptance in 1 Peter 3:8-9:

To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

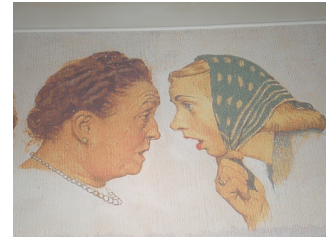


LET’S FIGHT AND WIN THE GREAT WORD WAR!

Remember, we speak out of our hearts. The Great Word War is only won as God rules our hearts so that we gladly and consistently speak for Him in the situations and relationships He sovereignly places us.

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 7 – Deceiving Words



Over the next few weeks we're going to get specific about this Great Word War. We're actually going to name the sins of the tongue, dragging the culprits out into the light of day. Here's where we're going: deceiving words, attacking words, bragging words, angry words, grumbling words, and crude/rude words. So put a bridle over your tongue and let's get started. Joseph Stowell's *The Weight of Your Words* provided much of the content for these studies.

LIES, LIES, LIES!

Back in 1991 authors Patterson and Kim wrote *The Day America Told the Truth* (DATT). Their conclusion: JUST ABOUT EVERYONE LIES—91 PERCENT OF US LIE REGULARLY! “The majority of Americans today (two out of every three) believe there is nothing wrong with telling a lie.”

This isn't surprising. Psalm 58:3 says we are all born liars: “They go astray from birth, speaking lies.” (ESV). And the older we get, the more sophisticated our lying becomes. “The majority of us find it hard to get through a week without lying. One in five can't make it through a single day—and we're talking about conscious, premeditated lies....” (DATT)

Lying is part of the culture:

The check is in the mail.
I've been praying for you.
I'll respect you in the morning.
I never inhaled.
I'll call you later.
It's not the money, it's the principle of the thing.
I didn't do it.
It's supposed to make that noise.
I will not raise your taxes.



“Every lie is a poison; there are no harmless lies. Only the truth is safe.” Leo Tolstoy
“Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.” Hitler

Seldom was the truth so ignored than in Hitler's Nazi Germany and Stalin's Communist Russia. Pacts and agreements were made between world rulers, only to be broken, often within weeks, if not days. Propaganda daily spewed complete fabrications of reality. The Soviets hired 70,000 full time censors to purge and spin all public communication in favor of the “Party line.” Russian Jewish author Isaac Babel said to a trusted friend, “Today a man only talks freely to his wife—at night with the blankets pulled over his head.” (Babel was arrested and executed in 1940, falsely accused of being a spy).

THE MASTER LIAR

We know where this nefarious poison of lies began and where it will end.
Lying began on earth in the Garden of Eden: “You surely shall not die!” (Genesis 3:4)
Jesus plainly exposed Satan's character as “the Father of lies.” (John 8:44)
Paul stripped Satan's false teacher of their cover: “Such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:13)

God clearly tells us how Satan operates in this world: “Satan, who deceives the whole world.” (Revelation 12:9).

Joe Stowell: Lying in some form “is the lifeblood of Satan’s system.”

THE END OF LIES

Two times God warns us where all liars will end up: “All liars shall have their place in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8) and “Outside...[is] everyone who loves and practices lies.” (Revelation 22:15)

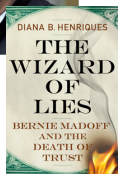
WHY DO WE LIE?

Kent Hughes in his book on the Ten Commandments, *The Disciplines of Grace*, offers several reasons why we lie. Can you identify with any of these?

Malice – Lies are shot like arrows to destroy another person’s character or integrity. Jeremiah knew all too well the lies of malice: “They make ready their tongue like a bow, to shoot lies.” (Jeremiah 9:3). Have you ever been pierced from behind by someone’s malicious lie about you?

Fear – This is probably the most common motivator of lies for us. We lie to avoid unpleasant consequences.

Embarrassment – We lie to avoid embarrassment, or to keep from offending or hurting others. Can you think of any examples?



Money or Greed – One little stretch of the “truth” might make the difference between making or losing the deal. Big Ponzi schemes function on either total lies or half-truths. Bernie Madoff made off with a lot of money under a lying scheme, for a while. Ahab wanted Naboth’s vineyard but he wouldn’t sell. Jezebel brought worthless men in to falsely accuse Naboth that he had cursed God. They took him out and stoned him and Ahab went and claimed his vineyard for himself! (1 Kings 21)

Personal gain – (sometimes known as being “street smart”) Lying is the way we get things done around here. It’s expected. We lie to make people think more highly of us, to protect our reputations, to get elected – all catering to the self.

HOW DO WE LIE?

Direct, bald-faced lies – “I’ve not had a bit of trouble with it.”

Cheat, or deny cheating. “I didn’t see the answers. Honest.”

Exaggerate – “A lot of people said they liked it.”

Flatter – “I’ve never met such a godly person.”

Carelessness with facts

Hiding the truth

Spreading false rumors or false conclusions – “I’m sure she took the money.”

Hypocrisy – “I pray for one hour every day.”

Silence – Saying nothing in the presence of a known lie is being complicit in the lie.

Skewed statistics or failing to give the bigger context – done all the time in politics.

Sound bites that misrepresent

Propaganda

False witness

Plagiarism – not giving credit for other people’s work

THE POWER OF LIES

Lies destroy character – “All the believability a person has, his very integrity, totters on the shifting sand of one lie.” Dr. Robertson McQuilkin

Lies destroy relationships – you’re just not going to have a good relationship with someone who lies to you.

Lies destroy churches – churches cannot thrive on lies. Lies will send people for the door.

Remember Ananias and Sapphir?

Lies destroy souls – unrepentant liars have a reservation in the lake of fire.

WE NEED RADICAL TRUTHFULNESS

God is a God of truth and cannot lie – Hebrews 6:18

God commands truth in the Ten Commandments – Exodus 20:16

God hates lying – Proverbs 12:22

God’s Son is full of truth and spoke only truth – John 14:6

God’s Word is truth – John 17:17

God redeemed us to become truth tellers – Ephesians 4:25

- Ephesians 4:25 Laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, because we are members of one another.
- Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.

Read, meditate and pray over these Proverbs to build a strong conviction for radical truthfulness.

- Proverbs 6:16 Things that the LORD hates...a lying tongue, and a false witness who breathes out lies.
- Proverbs 12:19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.
- Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.
- Proverbs 14:25 A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.
- Proverbs 17:4 An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.
- Proverbs 19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape.
- Proverbs 19:22 What is desired in a man is steadfast love, and a poor man is better than a liar.
- Proverbs 21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.
- Proverbs 21:28 A false witness will perish, but the word of a man who hears will endure.
- Proverbs 25:18 A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a war club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow.
- [Proverbs 26:28](#) A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Evaluate your speech. Have you fallen into a habit of lying without even noticing it? Do you lie just to please people? Have you lied to others and not repented and sought forgiveness for it?

Remember Joe and his Sunday School Superintendent.

- Psalm 141:3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.
- Proverbs 30:8 Keep deception and lies far from me.
- Psalm 15:2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart.

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 8 Hurtful Words



The Chinese discovered gun powder by accident in the 9th century while searching for an elixir of immortality, strangely enough. Gunpowder weapons and cannons began to be used in Europe in the 14th century, and we've been shooting each other ever since. But verbal gunpowder came right along with the first sinful shot in the Garden of Eden. Adam slandered Eve and God indirectly with his "the woman you gave me, she gave me to eat." We've been gossiping, slandering and sniping at each other ever since.

Words can absolutely destroy people. Gossip and slander ride on the tracks of rumors, and are driven by malice and self-promotion. A malicious tongue hurling these ugly verbal attacks leaves lots of hurt in its path.



LET'S GET SOME DEFINITIONS DOWN

We can hear the nuances between these words when we say, "He slandered me" or "He gossiped about me" or "He criticized me."

We **GOSSIP** when we share information about others we have no right to share.

Gossip consumes trust, breaks hearts, carries discouragement, smashes truth and rips promising friendships apart. Obeying God's truth builds up trust, brightens hearts, fully encourages, shines truth and pulls friendships together in harmony. So, why would you thrust your brothers and sisters down, when you can help them effloresce?(Gracious Beale)

We **SLANDER** when we intentionally share hurtful information that defames a person's character, whether the information is true or false.

We **CRITICIZE** when find fault with someone else in a way that puts that other person down.

THE BIBLE ON ALL OF THESE HURTFUL WORDS

Scripture doesn't make clear distinctions between these words. It uses words like whispering, backbiting, tale bearing, slandering, gossiping. Let's look at some of the key verses dealing with these nasty barbs.

Psalm 15:3 He does not slander (backbiteth not - KJV) with his tongue.

Psalm 101:5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy. God has zero tolerance for slander.

Proverbs 11:13 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter. Like a traveling merchant divulging secrets everywhere he goes.

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends. How often has this happened in your life?



Proverbs 18:8 The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body. The CEV: There's nothing so delicious as the taste of gossip. It melts in your mouth. GNT: Gossip is so tasty; how we love to swallow it. The Hebrew word for whisperer is "nirgan", to roll to pieces.

Proverbs 20:19 He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip. Principle: If a person will gossip to you about someone else, they will probably gossip to someone else about you.

Proverbs 26:20 For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. Gossips keep trouble burning hot. Sometimes they need a douse of cold water.

Romans 1:29-30 They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents.... Gossip and slander is totally godless.

2 Corinthians 12:20 Perhaps there may be...strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances.

- Slanders is "katalalia", speaking down or against. Gossip is "psithurismos", whispering secret slander.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

- Slander here is "blasphemia", to injure another's good name.

Colossians 3:8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

1 Peter 2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. You can't grow in God's Word while still feeding on these poisonous weeds.

1 Timothy 3:11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

- Malicious gossip is "diabolos", our word devil. A gossip, just like the devil, seeks to destroy the work of God.

*[Backbiting] is forbidden of God among the heinous, damning sins, and made the character of a notorious wicked person, and the avoiding of it is made the mark of such as are accepted of God and shall be saved: Rom. 1:29,30.
Richard Baxter*

1 Corinthians 13:6 Love...does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.

One of the most common forms of rejoicing in sin is gossip. Gossips would do little harm if they did not have so many eager listeners. This sin, which many Christians treat lightly, is wicked not only because it uncaringly reveals the weaknesses and sins of others, and therefore hurts rather than helps them, but because the heart of gossip is rejoicing in evil. Gossip that is true is still gossip. It is the way unfavorable truth is passed on, and often simply the fact that it is passed on, that makes gossip gossip. It has been defined as vice enjoyed vicariously. The essence of gossip is gloating over the shortcomings and sins of others, which makes gossip a great sin itself. A person is never helped by spreading the news of his sin. (from John MacArthur's commentary on 1 Corinthians)

WHAT FEEDS THESE DESPICABLE VERBAL UGLIES?

1 Timothy 5:13 And at the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.

- Gossips is phylaros, to bubble out silly nonsense. Here idleness, gossiping, and busybodies all go together, making their demeaning way from ear to ear!



CURIOSITY – Our curiosity can easily turn us into gossipy busybodies.

IDLENESS – Too much time on our hands can easily promote slander and gossip.

SELF-CENTEREDNESS – Wanting to share information about others that makes us feel important.

ARROGANCE – Slandorous comments put down others to make us look better.

BITTERNESS – Bitterness toward someone will come out in the form of slanderous hatred.

JEALOUSY – If we can find negative things in others to talk about, it soothes our own anxieties.

FEATHERS AND FISHERMEN

A young man slandered another person in the village. He went to the wise men and asked, “What shall I do?” “Put a feather outside every door in the village.” He did. Returning to the wise man he asked, “What next?” “Go pick up all the feathers.” “Impossible. The wind will have blown them all over town.”

Three preachers took a week fishing in Canada. Toward the end of their get away they began divulging their secret sins. “I really struggle with pornography,” rued the Presbyterian. The Lutheran confessed, “I’ve been seeing a woman behind my wife’s back.” The Baptist had been listening carefully. Finally he admitted, “I’ve been dealing

with gossip and just can't help spreading juicy tidbits about others. When are we returning?"

HOW TO STOP A GOSSIP

Gossip just might be the most attractive sin for Christians. We all clatter concernedly over gossip; and we nod vigorously when the preacher condemns it from the pulpit. Yet on the way home, or even while walking to the car, after church has let out, we start gossiping. We are very clever, of course, to mask our gossip behind words such as: "I'm so concerned about Mary"; or "Can you fill me in a little, so I can pray about it?" Far too much gossip goes on under the guise of prayer. (John MacArthur)

Gossip Filters (from Brenda Payne, The Heart that Wags the Tongue):

Is this information edifying?

Do I have permission to pass this information on to others? Amy Carmichael taught her orphans regarding their talk, "Never about, always to".

Is it necessary to share this information?

Is there anything hurtful in what I am about to say?

Will this conversation glorify Christ?

Ask yourself – Have you spoken first to the person you'll be talking about? Is it necessary for you to say this? When in doubt, don't. What is your attitude? Are you saddened or secretly glad, or even proud, to make this known? Is this an unfounded accusation against a leader in the church? (1 Timothy 5:19)

To others – "This sounds like personal or private information that I shouldn't be hearing. Have you talked to _____ about this?" When one lady finds herself in a gossipy situation that is tearing someone to shreds, she says, "You know, I'm getting very uncomfortable about this." Participants usually quickly change the subject.

Personal evaluation for putting off gossip and putting on edifying speech:

Ask a close friend, "Am I gossipy?"

Keep a daily check: "Did I gossip about or slander anyone today?"

Beware of hanging out with gossipy people – Proverbs 20:19 says, "Do not associate with a gossip."

Be conscientious to turn gossip into constructive conversations.

Pray Psalm 141:3 every morning.

Psalm 141:3 Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

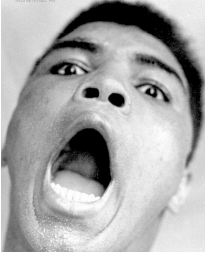
Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 9 Arrogant Words



"I AM THE GREATEST"



Some of us remember when Muhammed Ali was Cassius Clay from Louisville. He stunned everyone with his in-your-face braggadocio. A few thousand years earlier another braggert reigned in Babylon and said basically the same thing: "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" God, who knows how to humble the proud, cut the old Babbly King of Babylon down to size, and sent him out into the fields to graze like an animal.

Bragging, arrogance, big mouths have never been appreciated. Yet in subtle ways we have learned to toot our own horns to draw attention to ourselves. We aren't all that different from those Pharisees who made sure the cameras were rolling when they prayed, gave, or fasted. They wanted all the praise and credit they could get – but not from God. One thing you can count on from God. "He is able to humble those who walk in pride." Daniel 4:37.

What are some of the most ridiculous proud, arrogant comments you have ever heard?

"I don't need any oxygen."

"I'm kind of a big deal. People know me."

"I don't want to sound conceited or anything, but..."

John Lennon: "We're more popular than Jesus now."

Mike Tyson: I'm in trouble because I'm normal and slightly arrogant.

A lot of people don't like themselves and I happen to be totally in love with myself.

**My truck's bigger
than your truck!**



BOASTING – a popular social sport.

The boaster is an inflated zero – Philippians 2:3, "empty glory."

"Empty barrels make the most noise." Self-boasting is just the exaggerating my emptiness. Zeroes are zeroes, no matter how big they are. Boasters are quick to take credit. Carol Mayhall talks about "Name-dropping. Event-dropping. Even successful-ministry-dropping. (how many ya runnin?)."

Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.

Have you ever heard someone fish for compliments. We often just have to add that little extra that makes us appear more important. Like, Oh yeah, I read that long ago. "The difference between sharing information and boasting is in *who gets the glory*."

"God has really been using me. I led three people to Christ in the last year and a good number of people have told me how my message has helped them and may have even saved one couple's marriage."



How could that be said differently so God gets the honor instead of me.

This boaster is also a wandering quack. James 4:16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Check the context. The word for arrogance means wandering quack. Why is this guy arrogant? James is speaking of people who think they are

in control and promise more than they can deliver.

He's a glory thief. He takes credit when it belongs to someone else. It was your idea and now he claims he's the one who came up with it. How hard is that? Moses blew it when he stole the glory from God at that rock, saying "Shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?" (Numbers 20:10). God chopped Herod right down to a worm-infested corpse when the people's applause puffed up his ego – "because he did not give God the glory." (Acts 12:23)

If we want to boast in anything, we are to boast in the Lord – 1 Corinthians 1:31

FLATTERY – how far will it get you?

Few skills of the tongue are more manipulative and ego-serving than flattery. It is a complement designed to manipulate another for personal gain. It puts that person in debt to you. It is one of the major tools of the people-pleaser.

Flattery lines: "You're a beautiful woman. I just love the way you wear your hair." "I know you're smart enough to know a good deal when you see one." "I wish my husband were as kind and sensitive as you are."

Proverbs 2:16 To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters – smoothly seduces – with her words. Flatters is "chalaq", smooth.

Proverbs 28:23 He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.

Psalms 12:2-4 They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things; Who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

Proverbs 29:5 A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps.

Why do we flatter? And how can you tell when someone is flattering you?

EXAGGERATION – it was this big!

Lying about details to make information more sensational, interesting, or manipulative.



This is the salesman's temptation – to exaggerate the claims of a product to close a sale.

Joe Stowell tells of working for a carpenter. When he cut it too short, the boss would say, "Well, let's get the wood stretcher." Truth doesn't stretch either. It is what it is.

The problem with exaggeration besides being a sin against God is that it hurts relationships. When I exaggerate to you, I lose trust and credibility with you.

OVERTALK – yadayadayada blahblahblah

I am so important I just have to drone on and on about me.

I'm sorry, I've been talking about me all this time. Why don't you take some time to talk about me?

Proverbs 10:19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

Ecclesiastes 10:14 A fool multiplies words.

How does Philippians 2:3-5 apply to overtalk?

FINAL WORDS FROM GOD'S WORD ON BOASTING AND ARROGANCE

Romans 1:30 Insolent, arrogant, boastful.

The arrogant man holds his head high above all others; the insolent is quick to insult others.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love does not brag and is not arrogant.

A braggert is one who sounds his own praises. Arrogant is phusioo, puffed up like a blow fish or a pair of bellows.

2 Timothy 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy.

Boastful here is aladzon – empty pretender, like a wind bag.

Arrogant – huperephanoi – is to appear above others, despise others, and treat them with contempt.

2 Peter 2:18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, arrogant – huperogkos – big old overweighted, great swelling but totally empty words.

Finally, the Anti-Christ is the biggest mouth of all -

Revelation 13:5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

Arrogant here is megalá – from which we get our word megalomaniac. This world ruler is one big mouth that God will shortly slam shut.

Aesop's Fables - The Fighting Cocks and the Eagle



TWO GAME COCKS were fiercely fighting for the mastery of the farmyard. One at last put the other to flight. The vanquished Cock skulked away and hid himself in a quiet corner, while the conqueror, flying up to a high wall, flapped his wings and crowed



exultingly with all his might. An Eagle sailing through the air pounced upon him and carried him off in his talons. The vanquished Cock immediately came out of his corner, and ruled henceforth with undisputed mastery.

The proud look of man will be abased, And the loftiness of man
will be humbled, And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against
everyone who is proud and lofty, And against everyone who is
lifted up, That he may be abased.

Isaiah 2:11-12

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 10 Angry Words



An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression – Proverbs 29:22. When words explode out of an angry heart they turn into bullets, ripping and shredding relationships, causing ugly destruction and havoc in marriages, families, at work, and even between nations. Think about the last time you got angry:

What sparked it?
What were you thinking?
What did you say?
What were the results?
How's that workin' for you?

We usually get angry because either we're not getting what we want, or we're getting what we don't want. We get angry when we think our rights have been violated. "I want things my own way, in my time frame, at my pace, and at my convenience." (Carolyn Mayhall). Right or wrong, our sense of personal justice has been violated and we're not very happy about it.

And we've got all kinds of ways of describing angry tantrums:
He lost it.
He gave him a piece of his mind he couldn't afford to lose.
I read him the riot act.
She went ballistic.
He got really torqued.
We get hot under the collar.
We see red.
Our blood boils.



NOTORIOUS ANGRY PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE

Cain – got angry at God and murdered his brother Abel.
Saul – got jealous toward David and in anger tried to kill him.
Nabal the angry fool, and David, almost the fool in his reaction in anger.
The elder brother – resented his father's grace toward his brother and got angry.

ANGER ANALYZED

(These notes are from an article on anger by Dave Powlison)

Anger affects our bodies – we get flushed, our adrenaline surges, muscles clench up, heart pounds, breathing tightens, stomach churns, facial features morph into pure hideousness.

Anger affects our emotions, obviously – from mildly irritable to blind rage. We go from clamming up to blowing up, from heated up to icy cold: "I don't get angry; I get even."

Anger affects our minds – with intense focus on the issue, to replaying the mental video over and over, to feeding on the angry thoughts: "You make me so mad. This just isn't fair. I can't believe you did that to me."

Anger affects our behavior, especially our words. But it can get much more violent, with guns, blows, saucers. We've all seen little guys in the middle of the floor flailing their legs and arms

because they didn't get what they wanted. But in anger we withdraw, stick our noses in a book, slam a door, fire out accusations, sarcasm, curses, exaggerations, disgusted sighs, threatening, glowering, screaming, and more. And you don't have to go to school to learn all this.

Anger breeds self-destructive behavior – drunkenness, drug abuse, adultery, pornography, attempted suicide (“I’ll show them. They’ll be sorry.”), self-torture (burning self, cutting self), banging head against a wall, self-accusation, expressions of hopelessness, self-hating rage.

Anger affects relationships – marriages, families, fellow believers, work associates, neighborhoods, nations. Hitler stirred Germany’s anger about the Treaty of Versailles. A farmer I worked for was an angry man who modeled anger for his sons.

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL! I HATE SCHOOL! I'D RATHER DO ANYTHING THAN GO TO SCHOOL!



Anger becomes a weapon to coerce, manipulate, intimidate – basically to get one’s own way. People have to “walk on eggshells” (Bob), “duck into foxholes” because of one explosive member. Coaches and athletes throw bats, balls, and chairs onto the playing field to express their anger.

“When angry the human heart is laid out on the table with nowhere to hide.”

Anger tends to expose all the idols of our heart, what we are loving above God.

A TON OF SCRIPTURE WARNS AGAINST ANGER AND ANGRY WORDS

No wonder God says, “Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19).” If you’re like most of us, we are tempted to be slow to hear, quick to speak, and instantly angry. One man put it like this: “Speak when you are angry and you’ll make the best speech you’ll ever regret.” There is so much about anger in the Bible, it’s tough to know where to start. In every list of typical sins, anger is prominent, either right there in your face or simmering in the background.

Colossians 3:8 is one example of a nest of angry hornets: “But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.”

And then, these ugly monsters flying out from the flesh in Galatians 5:20 – Enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger (thumos – hard breathing, smokin’ fierceness), disputes, dissensions, factions. “Anger takes over when patience runs out and often vents itself in harsh words.”

And Ephesians 4:31 reveals the poisons of an angry tongue - bitterness (deep-seated anger), wrath (explosive anger, rage), anger (slow, simmering anger), clamor (yelling – neighbor yelled, could hear from street), slander (angry put downs), and malice (the heart disease that nurtures all these poisons).

JESUS ON ANGER - He plainly warned us, if we are angry toward our brother, or in anger call him names like moron and dummkopf, we are guilty enough to be sent into the eternal flames of gehenna. Matthew 5:21-22 – I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, “Raca,” shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, “You fool,” shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. Jesus also put His finger on the source of our anger – the heart! Mark 7:20-23 – Out of the heart proceed the evil thoughts...murder...slander...foolishness.

PROVERBS ON ANGER – I am picking and choosing because there is so much here. What does each verse say about anger or the angry person?

Proverbs 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing. *You can really hurt people with you anger.*

Proverbs 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated. *Angry people do stupid things, like punch holes in walls and throw things at people.*

Proverbs 14:29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly. *A self-controlled man has a lot of wisdom.*

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. *You can calm down another person's anger by responding with gentleness.*

Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger pacifies contention. *People who are quick to get angry create so much trouble.*

Proverbs 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. *Keeping your anger under control is a major life accomplishment.*

Proverbs 17:14 Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. *Don't be foolish and keep provoking an angry person.*

Proverbs 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression. *A wise person gives lots of grace to others.*

Proverbs 19:13 The contentious and vexing wife – see 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15. *Wives need to be very careful that their natural desires for security don't turn selfish.*

Proverbs 19:19 A man of great anger shall bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again. *Anger heavily habituated is hard to change.*

Proverbs 22:24 Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man. *Angry friends are a huge liability – they will affect your own handling of issues.*

Proverbs 26:21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. *An angry person quickly ignites conflict between people.*

Proverbs 29:11 A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back. *How we deal with our anger reveals our character, either wise or foolish.*

Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression. *Angry people do and say all kinds of destructive and irrational things.*

GOD'S COUNSEL FOR BECOMING SLOW TO ANGER

Eph 4:26-27 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

First, anger is a God given emotion and there are times when it is right to express anger, as long as it is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Christ got angry at times. His anger gave His words focus and force, but He was never quarrelsome, unkind, false, impatient, or irritable.

How do you know if your anger is righteous or selfishly sinful? Is your response intended to hurt or help? What is your purpose?

Second, don't let the sun go down on your anger. Each day has enough trouble of its own. We don't need to carry today's sinful anger into tomorrow. Confession, repentance, seeking forgiveness is the order of the day. If we keep sweeping our anger into the dust bin, after a while our anger gets so thick our love gets choked to death and we become ever more easily angered.

Third, if your anger settles into bitterness and hostility, the devil wins the game. How will you respond to that stubborn teen? Gloomy husband? Running-at-the-mouth co-worker? Slow driver in front of you? Your children doing any of a million anger-baiting things? Will you return evil for evil, or stop, ask God for help, and give grace instead?

If you are getting hot under the collar, you need to step aside to pray, cool down, ask God for James 3:18 wisdom – reasonable, gentle, easy to be entreated.



When we save up those little so-called hurts and offenses, we put them in our grenade pouch, and pull them out at opportune times to use against others. Lingered anger becomes bitterness and spins off lots of speech sins: lying, slander, murmuring, threatening, cursing, taking God's name in vain, and becoming contentious and argumentative. Proverbs 26:26 describes hatred in the heart that just keeps simmering down there, but is ready to explode when provoked, and that's scary. An angry man's heart is like the underground fires in Pennsylvania:



In the city of Centralia, Pennsylvania, locals accidentally ignited a huge coal mine that snaked underneath the town. Nobody knows for sure how or when it started, but many believe it was due to people burning rubbish near the entrance to the closed mine. Though many tried to put it out, the fire raged for most of the 1960s and some of the 1970s when the ground started collapsing and the roads began to buckle, like in this picture. A gas station owner discovered that the temperature in his underground tanks was hot enough to be extremely dangerous.

So the town was evacuated, and only a handful of holdouts live there still. Centralia's zip code has been rescinded, and the highway now routes around it. It's a ghost town. A ghost town that's still on fire

GOD'S GRACE AND YOUR ANGER

Carol Mayhall notes "One aspect of maturity is the ability to control anger, to work through differences of opinion, and to grow both in dealing with and working through conflict, thus exemplifying one fruit of the Spirit – self-control."

The Grace of a Soft Answer

A soft answer turns away wrath. Picture a ping pong game, where both players are slamming the ball, pushing their opponent further and further away. Then, a soft return just over the net draws that opponent close. In the same way, a soft answer turns away wrath.



2 Timothy 2:24 counsels God's slaves not to be quarrelsome – a word that means ready to go to war, wrangle, dispute. Rather he is to be patient when wronged and gently correct those in opposition.

CHRIST DIED TO SAVE US FROM OUR SELFISH ANGER

Thank God for these truths:

- Christ is ready to forgive us for our selfish anger through the cross as we confess and seek forgiveness from others.
- Christ is ready to change us from the sin of selfish anger to the godly quality of selfless patience and gentleness.
- Christ will help us practice self-control over our anger, using it to solve problems, not to destroy people.

25 Ways to Provoke Our Children to Anger

from *The Heart of Anger* by Lou Priolo

1. Lack of marital harmony
2. Establishing and maintaining a child-centered home
3. Modeling sinful anger
4. Habitually disciplining in anger
5. Scolding
6. Being inconsistent with discipline
7. Having double standards
8. Being legalistic
9. Not admitting you're wrong and not asking for forgiveness
10. Constantly finding fault
11. Parents reversing God-given roles
12. Not listening to your child's opinion or taking his or her 'side of the story' seriously
13. Comparing them to others
14. Not making time 'just to talk'
15. Not praising or encouraging your child
16. Failing to keep your promises
17. Chastening in front of others
18. Not allowing enough freedom
19. Allowing too much freedom
20. Mocking your child
21. Abusing them physically
22. Ridiculing or name calling
23. Unrealistic expectations
24. Practicing favoritism
25. Child training with worldly methodologies inconsistent with God's Word.

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 11 Grumbling Words

(Textboxes from Spurgeon's Ploughman's Talks)



Well, there's plenty to grumble and whine about...if there isn't a God in heaven who causes everything to work together for our good and His glory. But we do have such a God, and that's why grumbling isn't just a little sin – it's "wickedly finding fault with God," as Spurgeon put it. Philippians 2:14 allows no exceptions: "Do all things without grumbling and disputing." And a little later this believer's "Joy Book" commands us to "Rejoice in the Lord always." But we are too much like the Israelites of old.

THEY GRUMBLING IN THEIR TENTS

Israel was a nation of whiners and murmurers. It seems with each passing day they ended up grumbling in their tents. No sooner does Moses get them into the wilderness and they start in!



MOSES' FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE.

Exodus 15:23-25 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them.

"Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful, and every time we complain we miss a blessing."

Just two chapters later, we hear the same note of complaint:

Exodus 17:2-4 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me."

And then, the really big grumbling ordeal began with the ten spies and their bad report. Oh man, did that ever set them to murmuring. You could hear the whine of malcontents in their tents every evening as they griped and grouched and grumbled against Moses...against God.

Numbers 13:31-14:4 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! And why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become

plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” So they said to one another, “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.”

And God heard these whiners:

Num 14:28-29 “Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.'”

Did Israel learn their lesson? Not even close. Over in Numbers 16 in the rebellion of Korah the earth opened and swallowed up Korah and all his followers. Amazingly, Instead of repenting, the people blamed Moses and Aaron! Numbers 16:41 But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You are the ones who have caused the death of the LORD'S people."



Even the Psalter recalls Israel's ungrateful grumbling:

Psalms 106:24-25 Then they despised the pleasant land; They did not believe in His word, But grumbled in their tents; They did not listen to the voice of the LORD.

LEARNING FROM THE GRUMBLERS

What do you learn about grumbling from these Israelites? Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:10-11 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

(From Joseph Stowell's book The Weight of Your Words)

- They completely ignored who God was. Compare Josh and Caleb.
- They listened to the majority and their bad report rather than to God. Some just love to hear negative news so they have something to complain about.
- They quickly jumped to the wrong conclusion – God brought them out to kill them.
- And they made dumb decisions, like let's stone Moses and let's go back to Egypt.
- They splashed around in their own pity party – would we had died in Egypt, waa, waa, waa. Dutch, quit your brutzin' Poochy Lip Disease.
- They feared the unknown, their faith faded, and they grumbled.
- They became rebellious against the Lord – 14:9
- Their grumbling spread all around the camp, turning everyone into a whiner and malcontent. Grumbling infects others. There is something ugly in our hearts that likes bad news and thrives on complaining and grumbling.

GRUMBLING DIDN'T END WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT

It didn't take long for the early church to begin grumbling about food distribution:

Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

Philippians 2:14-15 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

The Greek word for grumbling is “goggusmos” – an onomatopoeic word.

A grumbler is like a little child who thinks every thing and every body exists for his pleasure and if he doesn't get what he wants, he lets you know it. Remember those workers who were promised \$50 for a day's labor but then grumbled when the other guys got the same who only worked a small portion of the day. Why did they grumble? They got what they were promised.

We're typically complaining about something. That's grumbling, and grumbling is a sin against God. God is not good, or wise, or sufficient, or worthy. We deserve and expect better, more, easier, different.

IT'S EASY TO BE A GRUMBLER – HERE'S HOW:



Expect a life with no problems. It doesn't take much to ruin our day – one flat tire will do it and send us into grumble whiney, why does this stuff always happen to me land. God designed life for you to face many obstacles so you will realize you aren't in control – He is. And He ordained lots of trials so you can grow and become like His Son. He gave you the husband you have so you will pray more and trust Him more and learn how to return blessing instead of insult!

Tripp: "We want fully glorified people in our lives. I want a wife who thinks I'm summarily wonderful, who agrees with me that I'm always right, who respects my every word." No financial troubles, cars that never need fixing, computers that never slow down, kids that are born fully sanctified.

Expect a life in which you never have to trust God or anyone else for anything. When you get into deep yogurt, you'll be whining and murmuring soon enough. God designed life for you to face trials and difficulties so you realize you aren't self-sufficient, but that you need His grace and provisions and assistance of others. God puts those giants in the land so you will cry out to Him and not trust yourself.

Expect a life in which stuff and material things will satisfy your soul. When you don't get enough stuff or lose stuff you'll be quickly splashing around in your own pity party. God designed life for you to find satisfaction in Him alone.

The Monk

A certain monastery enforced a vow of silence. Each monk could utter only two words every five years, and those two words had to be spoken in the presence of the abbot. One of the monks, when given his opportunity to speak, said, "Bad food!" Five years later, his two words were, "Bed hard." When given his third opportunity to speak five years later, he said, "I quit."

"Well," said the abbot, "you might as well quit. All you've done since you've been here is complain!"

Expect a life where other people will cater to you and give you whatever you want. You'll quickly begin emitting that low drone of a murmuring heart, because God didn't design life for you to be at the center.

GRUMBLING CAN EASILY BECOME A HABIT – EVEN AN UNCONSCIOUS HABIT

Husbands and wives can easily find themselves falling into the habit of griping and complaining about just about everything and anything, and often about other people. Or a husband can come

home to a wife who is loaded with complaints from the day and dumps them like a load of garbage at the landfill. Or the husband may regularly gripe about his boss or fellow workers and how hard it is and how tired he is – just that background drone of the grumbling heart. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we may be grumbling in our tents. Often the problem is with us!

GOD IS ABLE TO TURN GRUMBLERS INTO GRATEFUL HEARTS

Robinson Crusoe's list of things to be thankful for.

We need to arm ourselves with our spiritual RPGs. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be grateful that God is with you regardless of your troubles. Hebrews 13:5

Be grateful that God's power is sufficient for all of your needs and weaknesses. Ephesians 3:20-21

Be grateful that God deals with you in His grace and not in His wrath. Romans 5:9

Be grateful that God is supplying all your needs and be content with what you have: Philippians 4:11-13 I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity, in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Paul Tripp tells about a church leader from India who came to Philadelphia to study. "John, what do you think of Americans? You've been here a while." "Do you want me to be honest?" "Sure do." "OK. You have no idea of how much you have, and yet you always complain."

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"There's a bright side to all things, and a good God everywhere."

Sins of the Tongue

Pt. 12 Critical and Profane Words



Joe Stowell compares our tongues to a Swiss Army knife. We use our tongues to accomplish an amazing number of different things, from glorifying God and



encouraging others all the way over to cutting and dicing one another and cursing God. Like cutting a chicken into various parts, our tongues can cut into pieces something designed to be together. We can show displeasure with complaining, screaming, subtle barbs, nagging criticism, and angry words. We can verbally cut and destroy others in numerous ways.

TONGUES OF SWORDS AND ARROWS

Proverbs says this about the piercing tendencies of the tongue: “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Proverbs 12:18). The psalmist describes the tongue as a “sharp sword” and “a serpent” (Psalm 57:4; 140:3).

Aaron and Miriam criticized Moses for marrying unlawfully and for his leadership: Numbers 12:1-2, 8-10 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it.... “Why were you not afraid to speak against My servant, my servant Moses? So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed. But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow.

David cried out to God for protection from the critical words of his enemies: Psalm 64:2-4 Hide me from the secret counsel of evildoers, From the tumult of those who do iniquity, Who have sharpened their tongue like a sword. They aimed bitter speech as their arrow, To shoot from concealment at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him, and do not fear.

THE SIN OF A CRITICAL TONGUE

Romans 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

James 4:11-12 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

We speak against or criticize one another by:

Falsely accusing

Exaggerating faults

Needlessly repeating real faults

This judgmental attitude is a condemning, nit-picking, holier-than-thou, slandering of others, usually behind their backs. The Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte said, “He who is prone to slander absent men, may never at my table sit again.” Peter said, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus said, “Don’t you worry about him. You follow Me!”

THERE IS ONLY ONE JUDGE, AND YOU ARE NOT HE

Judging one another assumes an authority over others God never gave us.
Judging one another defies God's royal law of loving your neighbor as yourself.
Judging one another defies the very essence of the gospel, which saves, forgives, and builds up. It doesn't condemn and destroy.

THE HEART DRIVING A CRITICAL, JUDGMENTAL MOUTH

A proud, self-righteous heart – the Pharisees, "I'm not like other men..."
A disgruntled, back-slidden heart loves to hear negative things about others.

An ignorant but zealous heart is ready to call fire down on others who aren't as zealous as we are.

A selfish, blaming, demanding heart, especially in marriage and in the family.

Bitter, unforgiving people are often hypercritical and judgmental. They can't see any good, especially in the person they are holding a grudge against.



I love the story of the family driving down the country road with a trailer in tow, moving to a new town. They meet a farmer along the way. "Say, how far is Chalfont from here?" "About 30 miles due west." "How are the people there. Are they friendly?" "Well, tell me, how were the folks where you are acomin' from?" "They were a nasty, ungrateful, rude bunch." "Well, I hate to tell you, but I believe you'll find the folks there at Chalfont the same way!"



MARRIAGE IS NOT FOR CRITICAL SPIRITS

Love is actively fighting the temptation to be critical and judgmental toward your spouse, while looking for ways to encourage and praise. It is so easy to be picky and irritable. It is often easy to be better at catching your spouse doing what is wrong than it is to recognize the many places where they do what is right. When you forget who you are, failing to recognize your own weaknesses and failures, it is much easier to critical of your spouse. Critical responses to others are always rooted in self-righteousness. It is when we are affirming our need for grace and celebrating the grace we have been given that we delight in giving grace to the person we live with. (Paul Tripp, What Did You Expect?)

SPURGEON ON FAULTFINDING

From John Ploughman, on Faults

I have no patience with those who poke their noses into every man's house to smell out his faults, and put on magnifying glasses to discover their neighbors' flaws. Such folks had better look at home; they might see the devil where they little expected. What we wish to see, we shall see or think we see. Faults are always thick where love is thin. A white cow is all black if your eye chooses to make it so. If we sniff long enough at rose water, we shall find out that it has a bad smell. It would be a far more pleasant business, at least for other people, if fault-finders would turn their dogs to hunt out the good points in other folks; the game would pay better, and nobody would stand with a pitchfork to keep the hunters off his farm. As for our own faults, it would take a large slate to hold the account of them; but, thank God, we know where to take them and how to get the better of them. With all our faults, God loves us still if we are trusting in His Son.

ENTER LOG MAN!



Matthew 7:1-5 “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

We tend to be blind to our own critical, judgmental attitudes. We think we are right and justified in our comments, and yet they can so easily be critical and judgmental and not motivated by love and true concern.

We need to look ruthlessly in the mirror and pull out our own faults – which to us are specks but to others are logs, especially when we criticize them.

Once we've seen our own faults as logs, we'll never be critical or judgmental again. Fully aware of our own faults, we are filled with compassion and tenderness as we try to help our brother with his speck.

Stowell tells about a Christian physician whose children grew up happily committed to Christ and serving in local churches. He explained that part of the secret to the spiritual maturity of his children was, “My wife and I covenanted that our children would never hear us complain or criticize the church, church leaders, or another brother or sister in Christ.”

Carol Mayhall: “A discreet person guards his lips, restrains his speech, and muzzles his mouth.”

BUT HOW DO YOU HANDLE CRITICISM AGAINST YOURSELF?

(From an article entitled, The Cross and Criticism, by Alfred J. Poirier)

THE VALUE OF CRITICISM

First, no matter who you are, criticism is hard to take. When someone tells you you blew it, did a lousy job, you should have done something differently, our first reaction is typically to defend ourselves, make excuses, return a criticism against that person, or try to correct the critic.

In our pride and foolishness, we lose our ability to listen and learn. We may even explode in anger with retorts like, “I can never be good enough” or “Nothing ever satisfies you.”

Being teachable, able and willing to receive correction is a mark of the wise – “A wise man listens to advise.” (Prov. 12:15) “Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.” (Psalm 141:5).

In every criticism, whether valid or not, there is something to learn. And in every criticism we need to see God's hand. When Shimei cursed David his guard Abishai called Shimei a dead dog and wanted to whack his head off. But David forbade him: “If he curses, and if the LORD has told him, 'Curse David,' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

“The correction and advice that we hear are sent by our heavenly Father. They are His corrections, rebukes, warnings, and scoldings. His reminders are meat to humble me, to weed out the root of pride and replace it with a heart and lifestyle of growing wisdom, understanding, goodness, and truth.”

HOW THE CROSS ENABLES YOU TO RECEIVE CRITICISM WITHOUT SIN

God has already judged you a sinner. We agree with God about our sins and faults, and He knows us better than any human.

God has already justified you in Christ. It was through the cross of Christ God has already declared you righteous. “If God has justified me, accepts me, and will never forsake me, then why should I feel insecure and fear criticism?”

So you can receive criticism with this attitude: “You have not discovered a fraction of my guilt. Christ has said more about my sin, my failings, my rebellion and my foolishness than any man can lay against me. I thank you for your corrections. They are a blessing and a kindness to me. For even when they are wrong or misplaced, they remind me of my true faults and sins for which my Lord and Savior paid dearly when he went to the cross for me. I want to hear where your criticisms are valid.”

If I squirm under the criticism of others, I need to go back and agree with the criticism of the cross on my life.

If I seek to excuse and justify myself, I need to go back and remember that all my sins were judged in Christ and God has justified me.

Plus, if I have been crucified with Christ to my old sinful nature, then as a dead person I don't need to let criticism hurt me. In fact, I must not let criticism hurt me. Instead, I need to return good for evil, bless when criticized, even thank God and others for their criticisms.

HOW TO GIVE HELPFUL REPROOF GOD'S WAY

Unless we have a heart of love and a goal of being helpful, we are not in a position to criticize anyone. Ed Wheat counsel's married couples, never criticize your spouse. It never helps. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't correct, reprove, even rebuke at times. But our hearts must be right and our goal must be to help. We must speak the truth in love.

10 Questions to Ask before Confronting a Brother or Sister in Christ

by Paul Tautges

- Have I asked God to search my own heart for hidden, secret sins of which I need to repent? – Psalm 139:23-24
- Have I honestly searched my own life to see if I am guilty of the same sin of which I intend to confront my brother/sister? – Matthew 7:3-5
- Am I judging rightly, as Jesus directed, or do I simply have a judgmental attitude? – John 7:24
- Have I prayed for my brother's/sister's heart to be tender and receptive to my concern? – Isaiah 57:15
- Have I prayed for ears to listen to my brother's/sister's words and a heart to listen to the meaning behind his/her words? – James 1:19
- Have I recently been reminded of how I myself am also very vulnerable to temptation? – Galatians 6:1
- Have I recently read Romans 6 & 7 and been reminded of my own wretchedness and desperate need for the gospel and a gracious Savior? – Romans 7:24
- Am I willing to be patient and ready to help my brother/sister bear his/her sin burden? – Galatians 6:2
- Am I willing to love my brother/sister enough to speak the truth in love? -Ephesians 4:15

- Am I now ready to go to him/her in a spirit of gentleness and humility or am I angry and, therefore, more likely to be harsh? – Galatians 6:1

PROFANITY – Words that are blasphemous, rude, or crude. They may be swear words, curse ("cuss") words, dirty words, bad words, foul language, obscenity or obscene language, or expletives. Someone said, "Profanity is the attempt of a weak mind to express itself forcibly"

BLASPHEMY - You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. Exodus 20:7 See Deut. 28:58.

God has made known the glory of His nature in His name. YHWH means I am the eternally existing One.

Vain means in an empty, useless, wasteful manner. To use God's name in a frivolous manner is a direct attack on His character. It means God is useless or empty. God does not take lightly people who use His name lightly.

What about the "Christianized" versions of taking God's name in vain?

A salesman of wood trim couldn't end a sentence without using religious profanity. I told him he should have been a preacher, considering all those Bible words he was using.

RUDE AND CRUDE TALK

Ephesians 5:3-6 says it all –

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Filthy talk – obscene, dirty language (MacArthur's mom washed his mouth out with soap).

Foolish talk – sinful sarcasm, putdowns, silliness

Crude joking – double entendres ("What the fudge?"), dirty jokes.

These are not fitting for believers. In fact, this is one reason God will inflict His wrath against unbelievers. We easily dishonor God and His glory through our loose, profane tongues. When God gives us a new heart through the gospel, He does begin to clean up our tongues! And Philippians 4:8 gives the best grid for filtering out rude, crude talk –

Finally, brothers,

- | | |
|---|---|
| • whatever is true, | are these words true? |
| • whatever is honorable – | are these words honorable? |
| • whatever is just – | are these words right and deserved? |
| • whatever is pure – | are these words morally pure? |
| • whatever is lovely – | are these words lovely and appropriate? |
| • whatever is commendable – | are these words commendable? |
| if there is any excellence – | are these words pointing to excellence? |
| • if there is anything worthy of praise – | are these words giving praise to God? |

think about these thing