

## Daily Godly Living Exercising Caution in My Speech

**Intro: One of the real challenges of daily godly living is learning to exercise caution in our speech. What good is a profession of faith that does not change the way we talk? James warns us against making a claim to be religious while at the same time not controlling our tongues:**

*If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. (James 1:26)*

**We surely would not want this to be said about our religion; but in order to practice pure and undefiled religion we must be cautious in our speech. Let's consider some areas in our speech that always need special attention and where there are explicit warnings of God's disapproval as well as serious consequences for those affected.**

### **Cautions from God about our speech**

In order to truly live a godly life we must be careful about:

#### ***Dishonest speech***

People are dishonest for various reasons

Lies of vanity--to boost their image or status with men

Lies of flattery--to administer to the vanity of others and usually to promote their self-interest

Lies of convenience--to prevent embarrassment, justify neglect, shirk responsibility, or to gain selfishly in some way

Lies of fear--to avoid consequences of actions

Lies of malignity--to cause harm to others, injure another's reputation, to get revenge

Some people don't take lying very seriously and consider it a minor misdemeanor; but God says otherwise:

*There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. (Proverbs 6:16-19)*

This is God's warning that dishonest speech is serious.

#### ***Gossip***

Gossip is when you hear something you like about somebody you don't like.

*He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip. (Proverbs 20:19)*

A gossip is just a fool with a keen sense of rumor.

We are horrified when we read a story in the news about something killed in cold blood; but there is another kind of murder that rarely gets attention. With a gun you can kill a person's body; but with the tongue

you can kill a person's reputation and ruin their lives. There is a form of spiritual murder; it's called character assassination! The damage of gossip is well-attested in Scripture:

*He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends. (Proverbs 17:9)*

*For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. (Proverbs 26:20)*

*God is urging us to be cautious in what we say about others.*

### ***Profanity & cursing***

Profanity is language that reflects an irreverent view of God or the things of God. God never wanted His name attached to evil actions such as when someone swore to another by the name of God and did not keep his word. Thus God warned:

*"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)*

"Profanity is a public announcement of stupidity." Christians, on the other hand, are educated in the principles of God.

Our respect for God causes us not only to avoid misusing His name, but also failing to show appreciation for the grace we've received from Him. When He could have cursed us all, He instead chose to bless us.

We show our appreciation for this by blessing instead of cursing others even when they may mistreat us. Peter wrote to the persecuted church: *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. (1 Peter 3:8-9)*

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. (Romans 12:14)*

### **How can we avoid these sins?**

#### ***Recognize the danger of too much talking; rein it in!***

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

If you don't say it -- they can't repeat it.

#### ***Respect God***

The root of all improper speech is a lack of respect for God. He made our tongue to glorify Him, not to abuse others. To the shame of some Christians, James wrote about the tongue:

*With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. (James 3:9-10)*

When we truly respect God in our hearts, our speech will conform to the principles of love.

#### ***Love people***

Solomon zeroed in on the real problem of abusive speech:

*He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool. (Proverbs 10:18)*

If you love people you will spare them the hurt or anguish of false reports or embarrassing details being revealed about them.

***Think before you speak!***

*The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. (Proverbs 15:28)*

*T—Is it true?*

*H—Is it helpful?*

*I—Is it inspiring?*

*N—Is it necessary?*

*K—Is it kind?*

**Conclusion: Every day we have the opportunity to show the world that our salvation has resulted in a kinder and gentler attitude toward people. Use caution in your words each day. Say less and listen more. Let the principles of respect for God and love for others cause you to think before you speak. If you do, you will be “nearer heaven in 2007”.**