

Good Uses of the Tongue

by Roger Hillis

"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:34-37).

Most of the articles we read about the tongue are warnings about misusing it. And we need that kind of teaching. But we must also realize the power of our words to do good. There are many good ways we should use our tongues. Here are just a few of them.

Teaching the Truth

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). There will always be plenty of false teachers around (Titus 1:10-16) and more are needed who will use their ability to teach truth. This would include the evangelizing of the lost (Mark 1:17) and the building up of the saved (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Helping Others Correct Sin

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). This is not easy to do, but it is important work for the Lord. Those who are falling (or fallen) need to be encouraged to do what is right. Think about it; if you were going to be lost, wouldn't you want someone to care enough to try to save you?

Strengthening and Encouraging Others

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). Sometimes people just need an encouraging word. They need to know that others care for them and are concerned about them and their spiritual welfare. Barnabas was called "son of encouragement" by the apostles (Acts 4:36). Let's build each other up, not tear each other down.

Praising God

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). Worship helps draw us closer to God and to one another, but primarily worship is for the purpose of glorifying the name of the Lord. To God be the glory, great things He hath done!

Expressing Gratitude

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). We must be grateful to God for all of the wonderful blessings we enjoy in life.

Prayer

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is our ability to communicate the feelings of our hearts to our heavenly Father. It ought not to be a burden or simply a responsibility, but a divine blessing. Pray often and sincerely (James 5:16).

Humor

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). This is not referring to dirty, vulgar jokes or to ridiculing and making fun of others. This is good, clean, non-hurtful humor. It makes the day go better and can be a real blessing to our lives. Sometimes we just need to lighten up!

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4).

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).