



Sins of the Tongue

The volition of the soul under temptation from the old sin nature sponsors three categories of personal sins: mental attitude sins such as jealousy, pride, hatred, anger, etc., sins of the tongue such as gossip, slander, and maligning, and overt sins such as murder, adultery, and stealing. Psalms 34:13; James 3:6.

“Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.” (Psalms 34:13, NASB)

“And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6, NASB)

Out of the list of the seven worst sins in Proverbs 6:16-19, three are sins of the tongue. These are sins where the mind is in neutral and the old sin nature is in gear.

“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, NASB)

Many friendships are formed on the basis of compatibility of old sin natures because they use the same sins of the tongue. But this is not compatibility. The easiest way in the world to ruin your social life is to get together with others and be critical of some mutual target or victim. Work each other up. One starts with a criticism. Another one tops it, still another chimes in, everybody is very enthusiastic. Why? They are all shooting at the same target. This leads to a psychopathic social life. Reversionism is horrible.

Some of you think that it has to be some shocking reversionistic sin before you can get under the sin unto death. Not so. Sins of the tongue can put you under very quickly. Sins of the tongue are sponsored or motivated by mental attitude sins. Pride and jealousy are two sides of the same coin. If you are proud, you resent someone who appears to challenge your pride, therefore you are jealous of that person. This leads to bitterness, hatred, anger, and pettiness. Psalms 5:9.

“There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.” (Psalms 5:9, NASB)

Perpetuation of the sins of the tongue or habitual formation of the sins of the tongue indicate verbal reversionism. Verbal reversionism can result in the sin unto death. James 5:9; James 5:12; Psalms 12:3.

“Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.” (James 5:9, NASB)

“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.” (James 5:12, NASB)

“May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things;” (Psalms 12:3, NASB)

There is a time to keep silent and there is a time to speak. Eccl. 3:7.

“A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak.” (Ecclesiastes 3:7, NASB)

Sins of the tongue can also produce triple compound divine discipline. Mental attitude sins sponsor the sins of the tongue. There is divine discipline for mental attitude sins. The sins of gossip, slander, and



criticism produces double discipline. When it is gossip or slander, you assign sins to the individual. Whether the sins are real or imagined, the one gossiping gets the divine discipline of the one to whom they assigned sins. Criticism does not assign sins. Criticism is an expression of pride. Matt. 7:1-2; Psalms 64:8.

“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.” (Matthew 7:1-2, NASB)

“So they will make him stumble; Their own tongue is against them; All who see them will shake the head.” (Psalms 64:8, NASB)

To criticize, you don't need character; you don't need facts. All you have to have is a big mouth! That is all. And an audience! Who gets hurt when you criticize the pastor-teacher? Who gets hurt when you are critical of another person? You do. You get slapped three ways. Furthermore, God protects the believer who is victimized by the sins of the tongue. Job 5:19-21; Isaiah 54:17.

“From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you. In famine He will redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword. You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you will not be afraid of violence when it comes.” (Job 5:19-21, NASB)

“No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me,” declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 54:17, NASB)

God blesses the believer who is victimized by the sins of the tongue by making them a blessing to their detractor. This is grace turning cursing into blessing. James 5:16.

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16, NASB)

Control of the tongue or the absence of verbal sins is the sign of a mature believer possessing an edification complex of the soul and functioning in the spiritual life a maximum amount of the time. James 3:2; James 4:11-12.

“For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” (James 3:2, NASB)

“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?” (James 4:11-12, NASB)

Effects of Verbal Sins

In James 3:3, the horse is used as an illustration. A horse follows his head, so the head has to be controlled. When a horse runs away, you pull on one reign. A horse cannot run away in circles. A bit is for the purpose of obedience so that the rider may have authority over the horse. The horse obeys and the rider is benefitted when the horse is under control.

“Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.” (James 3:3, NASB)

A believer's mouth follows their thinking. A believer with mental attitude sins will often express those sins verbally. The mouth is an indicator of what they are thinking. God doesn't let the believer get away



with verbal sins any more than He does mental attitude sins or overt sins. The best way a believer can serve the Lord in a local church is to keep their mouth shut and only speak when they are in fellowship.

In James 3:4, a second illustration used is a ship. The rudder is very small compared to the rest of the ship. The ship direction is controlled by a very small rudder. The effects from a slight shift in the rudder redirects the entire ship. A believer's tongue must be under the control of their thinking and is best done while in fellowship. In this way, the enabling power of the Holy Spirit controls the believer's thinking in *epignosis* Bible doctrine – the Lord's thinking. 1 Cor. 2:16.

"Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires." (James 3:4, NASB)

"For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)

Habitual use of the sins of the tongue are a sign of reversionism. James 4:11; James 5:9; James 5:12.

"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." (James 4:11, NASB)

"Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door." (James 5:9, NASB)

"But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment." (James 5:12, NASB)

Verbal reversionism produces enough gossip, slander, maligning, criticism, and judging to destroy an entire congregation. In James 3:5-6, the illustration used is a fire. One spark of the tongue and you can burn down a whole congregation. This is why Christian servants need God's protection. Someone bad-mouths someone else and their friends fall right in line and can't think on their feet.

"So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell." (James 3:5-6, NASB)

Since the sins of the tongue can destroy an entire congregation, it is the duty of the pastor-teacher to warn his congregation against them. 2 Tim. 2:14-17.

"Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus," (2 Timothy 2:14-17, NASB)

Where people have been properly reared under the Laws of Divine Establishment (unbelievers), there are certain things they will not do. Like kiss and tell or never welch on an obligation. Troublemakers are characterized by the sins of the tongue. They are always nit picking. Believers are commanded to separate from verbal troublemakers. Psalms 52:2; Rom. 16:17-18.

"Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit." (Psalms 52:2, NASB)

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to



the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.” (Romans 16:17-18, NASB)

By avoiding the sins of the tongue, the believer can both lengthen their life and find great happiness. Stop criticizing members of the family of God against fellow believers. Psalms 34:12-13.

“Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.” (Psalms 34:12-13, NASB)