

CONFIDENCE OR CONFLICT

TEXT:

James 1:26: If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

INTRODUCTION



A doctor looks at the patient's tongue to help judge the condition of the patient's health. God does, too.

Matthew 12:24: But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

Often we can determine our spiritual condition by our conversation. Do words of confidence in God — or words of inner conflict — come out most often? Do words that edify His Kingdom find expression, or do words that hinder His Kingdom come from our mouth? By our words we are justified or condemned.

I. SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL SICKNESS

- A.** We have high aims and lofty ideals, but unworthy thoughts and evil speech.
- B.** We have faith in God and Jesus Christ; yet we are depressed by problems, and our conversations indicate powerlessness.
- C.** We claim great capacity for love of our fellowmen; yet our speech betrays us. We become annoyed and angered by people every day.



II. SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL WEAKNESS

We want to be classed as witnesses for Christ; yet our conversation seldom refers to Him. What we say instead [of talking about Him] is more important to us than He is.

ILLUSTRATION:

Karl Barth said: *“Can the world say this to me: Why are you not saying what you*

ought to be saying, and saying it with eloquence? Why don't you force us to pay attention to you and listen to you? We should like to see you less timid, more consistent, bolder. We often have the impression you are afraid. And you spread so little light and joy around you. When you make yourself heard, it is usually with cares, complaints, lamentations, and accusations. Can the world say that to us?"

III. AN UNBRIDLED TONGUE IS SYMPTOM OF INNER CONFLICT

- A. Do we speak a Gospel of “things”.
1. Are our conversations given over to things we own or want to own?
 2. Are our family arguments often over the priority of purchases?
 3. Is security, comfort, and style talked about with more enthusiasm than things of God: Amen — Ouch, or — Oh, Me!
- B. Are words just a mask to cover real feelings? Do we speak from the heart, or say what's expected of us?



ILLUSTRATION

When we say, “*Hello, how are you?*”, do we really care enough to stop to listen to a list of symptoms and complaints, or do we want a quick reply like “fine” so we can go on our way, not really caring or concerned?

ILLUSTRATION

When we say, “*Come see us*”, do we really mean it? Or, are we hoping to make the invitation vague enough to escape the visit, yet friendly enough to appear hospitable? Look out now. Are you thinking, “*There that preacher has gone to meddling again?*”

- C. Are our words actually destructive?
1. **Lies — filthy stories — smearing; obviously evil**
 2. **Hateful words; God is Love. Where do hateful words come from?**



3. **Impatient words** — Impatience is a form of pride.
4. **Sarcastic words** — Do you really want to be a “smart aleck”?
5. **Gossip** — You can murder a personality or steal a reputation.
6. **Prejudice** — A lack of loving understanding

D. James says:

James 3:5:

⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7. Unchecked fire hurts — destroys — spreads — consumes!

IV. CONFIDENCE IN OUR CONVERSATION

We should portray confidence, not conflict, as we talk.

A. Confidence through His Word.

1. The Bible, by showing us areas of our spiritual immaturity, saves us from self-deception about “how good we are”.
2. We gain confidence as we read how to avoid these blocks to spiritual growth.

B. Confidence thru Christ-likeness which comes from self- crucifixion.



1 Peter 2:21-23:

²¹ For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His [Jesus'] steps:

²² Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:

²³ Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He

threatened not; but committed Himself to Him Who Judgeth Righteously
[Father God]:

- 1. He did not condemn.**
- 2. He did not gossip.**
- 3. He did not worry or fret.**
- 4. He did not glorify worldly things by His speech.**
- 5. Hate, prejudice, impatience, filthy language — were all missing from His conversation.**

C. Confidence in His Power.

Our own power is never enough. We not only need His Word and His example, but also His power.

Acts 1:8: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

C. W. Edwards, in his book “*Christians Being and Doing*” says, “*Words... are works; and because they spring from the very source of our personality, they can be a judgment for or against what we are in our inner selves. Our words are an extension of our personality, moving out like ripples in a stream to touch all those about us, for good or for ill.*”

What source do your words spring from? Is your tongue “set on fire of hell” as James describes the source of evil conversation; or is it set on fire by the pure Pentecostal fire of the Holy Spirit?

Psalms 19:14: Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

As it was in James’ day, so it is today. Many *professed* but did not *possess*. Many loved to hear the Gospel, but neglected to comply with the Gospel standard. Many in that day talked and bragged about how much they loved the Lord and how they served Him, but they did not practice Christ’s doctrines and thereby deceived themselves.

Matthew 7:22-27:

22 Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Depart!

Here is where we can become our own worst enemy in self deception.

1. The heart is the proper residence for pure religion. Man only looks at the outer appearance, but God looks deeper. Religion in the heart brings us under God's control and into subjection to His Word, but religion that is only in the mind and body prevents us from conquering things within and around ourselves.

In order to regulate the tongue, the heart must be right.

2. In order to regulate the tongue, the heart must be right.

Matthew 12:34: O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

James 3:7-8:

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Psalms 39:1: I said, I will take heed to My ways, that I sin not with My tongue: I will keep My mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before Me.

David said this because the dangerous, monstrous state of weakness is always near at hand. Man's tongue tells what is in the heart. It reveals what's in us.

Man's tongue tells what is in the heart.

3. Paul tells about outward faith and works of charity that — without the love motive within — makes us like sounding brass and tinkling symbols.
1 Corinthians 13:1: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

4. Jesus told Peter: *When you are converted, then strengthen the brethren.*

Luke 22:31-34:

³¹ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

³² But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

³³ And he said unto Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death."

³⁴ And He said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me."



His loose tongue was not under divine control. We need to set a watch before the door of our lips, remembering our tongue is in a wet place and is liable to slip.

Psalms 141:3: Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

A fool is known by his multitude of words. God is in Heaven and we are on earth therefore we are to let our words be few.

Ecclesiastes 5:3b: a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

Ecclesiastes 5:2: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.



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