

LESSON 2



THE WORDS WE SPEAK

Scripture Texts: Matthew 12:34-37; Proverbs 10:19; James 1:26; 3:2; Ephesians 4:29; Malachi 3:16-17

If our lives are to please God, we must direct our actions to obey Him. This makes the Christian life a daily voluntary following of the Bible and the Spirit. Our words come from our hearts. They are good or evil as our hearts are good or evil. Our words have great power in our lives and in the lives of others.

Directly affected by our thoughts are our words. Words are the outward expression of thoughts. Words of others have a continuous daily effect upon our lives, and our words have an effect upon their lives. We are commanded to control them both in quality and quantity. We will stand responsible at the Judgment for our words.

MEMORY VERSE: *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

— *Matthew 12:37*

Evil Heart Cannot Speak Good

Matthew 12:34-37. **How can ye, being evil, speak good things?** When a person with an evil heart tries to speak good words, they come out as hypocrisy. One cannot from the same "fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (James 3:12). And so, good words cannot come from an evil heart. **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**

Then how can an unsaved preacher lead the Church of God? How can he open to them the truths of salvation? He cannot. How can an unsaved Sunday school teacher teach the class how to be saved and live godly lives? He or she cannot. **A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.** Good must first be in the heart to be brought forth. So, on the other side, **an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.**

The Pharisees, to whom Jesus spoke in Matthew 12, had evil hearts. Their hearts being evil, they could not speak good things. When one talks, he exposes what is in his heart. The heart is the fountain of life; a stream flows from it.

Because our words are of such great importance and because they carry with them the quality of the heart from which they come—either evil or holy—they must be accounted for **in the day of judgment.** Each **idle word that men shall speak**—words that are considered of no consequence in bringing the message of eternal life to lost souls—must be weighed and spoken in truth. This is no time for lightness and foolishness. Clean conversation is the fruit of the lips of the saved.

Bridle the Tongue

Proverbs 10:19. **In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.** Words are weighty, whether false or true. We should speak only words of truth. Even words of truth, if spoken to degrade another person, should be left unsaid. Talking too much can be sin. Words should never leave our lips so fast that we do not have time to put the proper value on them before we let them go. Throwing out words freely is like throwing feathers into the wind; they can never be called back. Beware of a tongue that runs constantly. Beware of telling all you know.

James 1:26. **Bridleth not his tongue.** If any man talks without considering and choosing his words, he is deceiving himself. He may say he is saved, but his **religion is vain**, empty, and false. We must control our tongues by putting them under the control of the Holy Spirit.

James 3:2. **If any man offend not in word.** If no filthy, lying, angry, selfish, cutting, gossiping, foolish, idle words are his, if they are kind, loving, helpful, pure, and holy words, then **the same is a perfect man.** His words are not offensive to God or to man. If one's tongue, the hardest member to control, is under God's control, then the whole body or the whole

life is also God-controlled. Then he is **a perfect man**. Jesus' standard for man is perfection. See Matthew 5:48. He has made the way. Read Hebrews 10:14. We cannot do it in our own strength. In His, we can.

Importance of Words

Ephesians 4:29. **Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.** If one is saved and Spirit-filled, the heart has no corrupt motive within, and his words will be pure and will **minister grace unto the hearers**. This is one of the purposes for which we have speech—to help others to see and understand and obtain the grace of God. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). What one says shows the kind of person he (or she) is. How can one speak good things when evil thoughts lurk within? Solomon says that he who spreads false reports, yet pretends to be a friend, "is a fool" (Proverbs 10:18).

Words are the passing of our thoughts to others. We sometimes hear it said, "I gave them a piece of my mind." Yes, and also a piece of one's heart, one's life, and one's self. When God wished to give of Himself to men, He sent a message of love to them by sending His Son and calling Him **the Word**. Since God used *Word* to describe Christ, we see, in part, the value of the meaning of words. What of ourselves are we passing to others through our words—pure thoughts, kind, upbuilding, life-giving influences, or those that blight and destroy?

Talk About the Lord

Malachi 3:16-17. **They that feared the LORD spake often one to another.** In the fellowship of saved people, the name of the Lord is spoken often. They talk of His Word, His goodness, His blessings, His love, His promises, and His caring and sharing. The Lord, always interested in His people, hears. He has **a book of remembrance** written of those who think and speak of Him. Their love is precious to Him. **They shall be mine . . . when I make up my jewels.** The Lord has a special place for the people who speak of His goodness and their love for Him. We love to speak of those we love.

JUST A THOUGHT

A rumor is about as hard to unspread as butter.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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