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The Tongue: One of Man's Most Dangerous Weapons ~ Wayne Jackson - www.christiancourier.com

It is not without significance that two of the Ten Commandments deal with speech—taking the name of God in vain and bearing false witness against another person (Ex. 20:7, 16). Similarly, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned against the abuse of the tongue in “swearing falsely” (Mt. 5:33-37). Elsewhere, Jesus Christ gave a stern warning regarding the unseemly language that sometimes proceeds from a person’s mouth (Mt. 12:36-37). The way one talks is a very revealing index to his character. The Scriptures describe different kinds of “tongues” (speech). Let us consider some of these.

The Hateful Tongue. Jeremiah spoke of those “treacherous” people who “bend their tongue like a bow.” He cautioned that no one should place trust in the person who “deceives” and “slanders,” nor with those who “have taught their tongue to speak lies” (Jer. 9:2-5). Jehovah hates the lying tongue (Prov. 6:17; cf. Acts 5:3-4). Some use their tongues to rip and gut others—even their brethren in Christ.

The Licentious Tongue. Solomon said that the mouth of the forbidden woman is a “deep pit” (Prov. 22:14). Note the perfume-drenched words (“fair speech”) of the dissolute woman who lures the unwary lad to his destruction (Prov. 7:14ff). Men have similarly taken advantage of vulnerable, lonely women by their deceitful language.

The Boasting Tongue. The vain Pharisee, in a dramatic presentation before the Lord, paraded his feigned accomplishments, but he was not accounted as just with God, in spite of his boasting (Lk. 18:9ff). It was Francis Bacon who said something to the effect that “a bragging man is scorned by the wise, and admired by fools.” There are those with whom one can scarcely engage a conversation without being bored to tears with an incessant stream of self-adulating and dubious accomplishments.

The Impetuous Tongue. An inspired writer declared:

“[L]et every man be swift to hear, slow to speak” (Jas. 1:19). The poet Robert Frost once said that “half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can’t, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it.” A wise man wrote: “Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise” (Prov. 17:28). Unfortunately, he frequently opens his mouth and removes all doubt! There are far too many people who talk in an attempt to discover the content of their thoughts.

The Obscure Tongue. Have you ever had a religious conversation with a person, and when the exchange was concluded, you had no earthly idea where he stood on any significant issue? Such folks slip and slide, flip and flop. “What is your position, brother?” “Well, I think there is much to be said on **both sides** of that argument.” Some people simply cannot be pinned down on any point of truth.

The Critical Tongue. A wise man values constructive criticism; it’s just that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between constructive criticism and plain old **meanness**. But, as Solomon observed, “A rebuke enters deeper into one who has understanding, than [do] a hundred stripes into a fool” (Prov. 17:10). A wise person can learn valuable lessons from his critics if he but will. On the other hand, there are those who have turned criticism into a recreational sport. Whenever they gather, like vicious piranha, they devour all flesh in sight.

The Double-Tongued. In setting forth qualifications for deacons, Paul admonished that they must not be “double-tongued” (1 Tim. 3:8). The double-tongued person is one who has refined the art of duplicity. He will say anything to get you off his back, then say quite another to someone else. His word is not his bond. His tongue flaps like an irritating awning in a winter storm (see Prov. 8:8).

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The Tongue...

The Explosive Tongue. James observed that the tongue is an instrument that no man can control completely (cf. Jas. 3:8). But some make almost no attempt at the effort. At the least irritant they explode with expletives. One might be surprised to listen to the language of the man on Monday who has spoken so piously over the Lord's table on Sunday! To those who operate in such fashion, the Lord's says: "What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant upon your lips?" (Psa. 50:16).

Conclusion: "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth" (Eph. 4:29), rather, put away shameful speaking from your mouth (Col. 3:8). Listen to the warning of the Judge of the universe:

"I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Mt. 12:36-37).

Can Sin vs. Cannot Sin?

Dave Miller - www.apologeticspress.org

Those who disbelieve the inspiration of the Bible commonly call attention to passages that appear, on the surface, to contradict each other. Oftentimes, the apparent disparity is easily clarified by a closer look at the original language which the Holy Spirit selected to express Himself. One confusing concept where knowing the underlying grammar sheds further light is seen in 1 John. In 1 John 1:8-10, we find these words:

*If we say that we **have no sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... If we say that we **have not sinned**, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

These words are hardly surprising, since most people understand that they are not perfect and, in fact, have sinned many times. Yet reading further in 1 John, one encounters the follow startling remarks:

*Whoever abides in Him **does not sin**. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.... Whoever has been born of God **does not sin**, for His seed remains in him; and he **cannot sin**, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:6,9).*

The skeptic might easily conclude that the Bible contradicts itself—or at least John did.

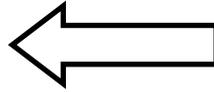
However, in Greek, tense generally refers to "kind of action" which consists of linear or punctiliar. "Linear" refers to continuous action, while "punctiliar" refers to point action, a single event. The verb rendered "have (not) sinned" (a perfect active indicative) in chapter 1 refers to point action in the past with abiding results. John was saying that Christians sin, but they commit isolated, less frequent acts of sin since they are no longer under the rule of sin, and they constantly repent and confess their sins (vs. 9).

Chapter 3, on the other hand, uses a present indicative of continuous action. It refers to habitual, ongoing sin without compunction, with sin ruling one's life as in his pre-Christian state. John did not contradict himself. He simply called attention to the fact that Christians are certainly not perfect. We make mistakes like everyone does. However, having changed our minds (the meaning of "repent") about our pre-Christian lifestyle, we have deliberately chosen to forsake the sinful behavior that characterized our lives as non-Christians. Those who have not become Christians, however, have no motivation to resist sin, striving every day to eliminate it from one's mind and life.

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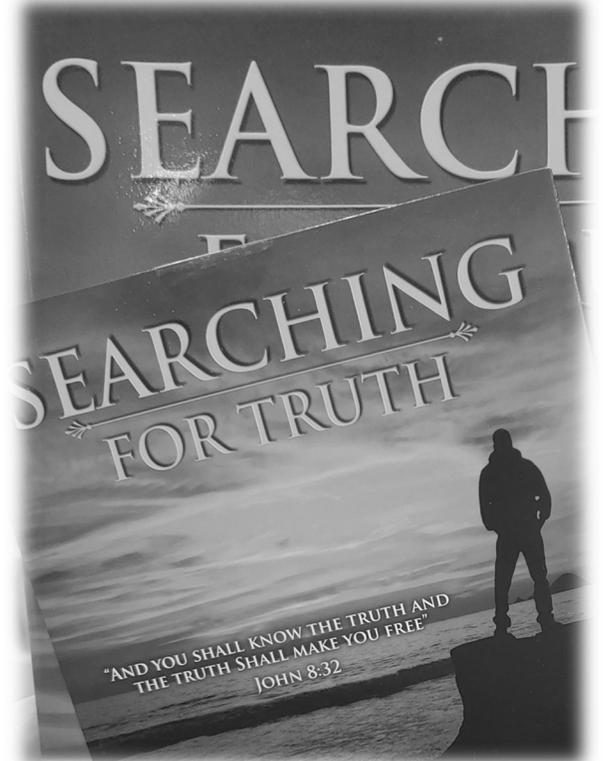
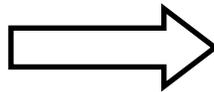
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- We use the Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3). We have no creed book, convention, or central headquarters.
- Our name is after the One who died to establish His church (Rom. 16:16).
- The church of Christ began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4).
- Jesus promised to establish His church (Matt. 16:18).
- That church was purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28).
- The church is married to Christ (Rom. 7:4).
- It was established in the first century (Acts 2:41, 47).
- Jesus is the one and only Head of the One Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23).
- You can only be added to the church by God Himself (Acts 2:41, 47).

What about being saved?

- All people are saved by grace, though faith (Eph. 2:8-9).
- No one is saved by faith alone (Jas. 2:14-26).
- No one is saved by grace alone (Matt. 7:21).
- Jesus said that belief plus baptism will produce salvation (Mk. 16:16). That is a promise, not a command.
- The Bible teaches that repentance plus baptism produces remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38).
- Belief, confession, and baptism is seen in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:37-38).
- The Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8).
- Christ is "put on" in baptism (Gal. 3:26-27).
- The apostle Peter said that "baptism does save us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

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