How to Use Your Tongue Wisely

**James 5:12-20**

**I. v12 - The Wrong Way to Use Your Tongue**

A. Swearing.

 1. Americans swear by using words associated with human immorality.

 2. Europeans swear by defaming God & spiritual things in some way.

 **a. Blasphemy (βλασφημέω) = abusive speech, personal mockery. Came to mean deriding God & His power in some way, slandering or speaking lightly or profanely of sacred things.**

  **b. Lord Jesus was accused of blaspheme when He said things that sounded like He was making Himself equal with God (Mk 2:6-7; 14:63-64 & Jn 10:33).**

 3. Swearing violates one of the Ten Commandments.

 a. Ex 20:7 - You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

 b. KJV says “taking the Lord’s name in vain”. “In vain” means to empty or deflate.

 4. ILL: Lady in Norton using, “O Lord”.

B. Oath taking.

 1. Does this mean you can’t take an oath in court?

 a. You can “affirm” in court .

 b. Oaths taken in court are permitted in the Bible.

 (1) Ex 22:11 - the issue between them will be settled by the taking of an oath before the LORD that the neighbor did not lay hands on the other person’s property.

 (2) Num 5:19 - Then the priest shall put the woman under oath and say to her. . .

 (3) Deut 6:13 - Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.

 2. But Lord Jesus did say in Matt 5:37 - Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

 3. In fact the Lord said, Do not swear at all (Matt 5:34). That should be enough for us!

 4. The Lord considers doctoring up your speech by adding needless adjectives just evil.

**II. v13-20 - Right Ways to Use Your Tongue**

A. v13 - Praise the Lord when you’re happy.

 **1. Sing (ψάλλω) = pick, rub, pull, twitch or strum an instrument.**

 **a. Example of singing with an instrument. Ps 33:2 - Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.**

 **b. Same word used in Rom 15:9 - Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.**

 c. Same word used in I Cor 14:15 - I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

 2. So praise when you’re happy.

 a. The shepherds did after they left the manger (Lk 2:20).

 b. The disciples did before the Triumphal Entry (Lk 19:37).

B. v14-15 - Pray when you are sick.

 1. v17-18 - ILL: Elijah’s prayers to stop & start the rain (I Kgs 17:1; 18:41- 46).

 2. v14-15 - Calling the elders.

 3. Will the sick person get well if the elders anoint & pray? This passage seems to say so. But this passage is very controversial! Is this physical healing or salvation from sin?

 a. Possibility # 1: The anointing could be administering medicine.

 (1) Prayer & medicine should go together.

 **(2) Make well (Restore) (σῴζω) = “save”, “keep from harm”, “rescue” as well as “heal”.**

 **(3) Heal (ἰάομαι) in v16 = physical “healing”.**

 **(4) I Jn 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unright- eousness.**

 **(5) When we confess our sin, He will forgive - that’s a promise.**

 **(6) So when you discover sin in your life, confess it & accept the promised forgiveness!**

 **b. Possibility # 2: The anointing with olive oil could be ceremonial.**

 **(1) Elders are called, they anoint & pray.**

 **(2) Physical healing happens.**

 **c. So - what’s the answer, preacher?**

 **(1) Here’s how I deal with this when I am asked to come, anoint with oil & pray.**

 **(2) Out of simple obedience to this passage, I go, anoint with oil & pray for physical & spiritual healing. No promises, just obedience. Leave the results to the Lord.**

C. v16 - Confess your sins to some other Christian you trust.

 1. The prayers of a prayer warrior are powerful with the Lord!

 2. One of the main purposes of the church is to comfort, encourage & build one another in faith (I Thess 5:11).

 3. Confession of sin to you is a sacred honor to be held in strictest confidence.

 4. Build trust relationships first. One purpose of Ministry Teams.

D. v19-20 - Witness to those who have turned their back on the Lord.

 1. It is possible for you to turn your back on the Lord & be lost!

 a. If you leave the Lord your soul will die.

 b. If you leave the Lord you will be accountable for your sins.

 2. Your witness could bring someone back to a saving relationship with the Lord!

Remember how important & influential your words really are! Use your words to comfort & build up & to glorify God! Then you will be using your tongue for what it was intended!

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