

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 blasphemy 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) (σώζω) = "save", "keep from harm", "rescue" as well as "heal".**
 - (3) **Heal (ιάομαι) 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 unrighteousness.**
 - (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!