

The Wrong Use of Words (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] that scares you.

Could be some of you have been to the doctor and what you heard was frightening. It could be some of you, when you got your report card recently, what you saw was scary because you knew what kind of trouble you'd be in.

For some, what has scared you lately is finding out what the experts say you need to save for your children's education or for your retirement.

If you've been here the past couple of weeks, you may have been scared like me at something that Jesus said about our words.

Look at it with me. It comes from Luke chapter 6, verse 45. He said, The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil.

[1 : 12] For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks. Think about that. Jesus said, from out of the abundance of our heart, our mouth speaks.

Isn't it scary to think that some of the things that come out of your mouth is an indication of what's in your heart? You know, we saw, what, a couple of weeks ago, our speech reveals who we really are deep down.

If our words are filthy, it means our heart's filthy. If our words are deceptive, it means we've got a deceptive heart.

But if our words are true and wise, that says something about our heart as well. We're going to continue our study of the wrong use of words this morning.

We're in the book of Proverbs. And what I want us to notice, think about, not just notice, but really think about, as we look at the various forms of speech, the wrong use of words.

[2 : 32] Like last week, it was gossip and slander. We're going to look at some more today. If you have a problem with such, that's not really a speech problem.

That's a heart problem. And that's why those words of Jesus scare me. Well, some of the things that come out of my mouth, it's not a tongue problem.

It's much deeper than that. Now, I want to qualify that statement a little bit. If a person is truly a child of God, then God is working in their life to develop Christ-like character.

I mean, that's Romans chapter 8, 29. God works in all of His children, conforming us to the image of His Son. That's what He does from the time He saves us until our lives are over here on earth.

But, as God works in us, as long as we're here in this world, we've got a sinful nature. And we don't always cooperate with God, do we? We don't always obey the Spirit of God's conviction, don't say that, don't do that.

[3 : 54] We just sometimes do what we want to do and say what we want to say. God's work in us to make us more and more like His Son is a lifetime process, but it's not a perfect process because of our continuing problems with sin within.

That means that our spiritual growth will never just be totally consistent, growing and maturing and rising on up like a chart.

No. No. I love the book title that Chuck Swindoll has, Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back, because that is the way we grow as Christians.

There's times in your life, you know since you've become a Christian, there have been times when you really made some good progress. God was just working in you, and you were obedient, you felt like you were close to Him, you could see how He was changing, maybe the way you thought about some things, the way you were actually living.

But then, maybe you looked at yourself too closely and took pride in yourself. Before you knew it, you were having some bad attitudes, saying things you shouldn't say, doing some things you knew didn't please God.

[5 : 14] You make three steps forward sometimes, but take a step or even two steps back. But here's what I want us to understand. If we're Christians, we are making progress in our spiritual growth, in our development of Christ-like or Christian character, because God does that work.

And God's not going to fail. He works within us, as we saw last week from Philippians chapter 2, to cause us to will, to want, and to be able to please Him.

But it's not going to be flawless. Now, this pattern of growth, up and down some, but still making progress. That is true about every aspect of our lives, including our speech.

But you know, this means that we will experience struggles with our words at times, but some people experience more trouble, more struggle than others.

Let's just face it. Some of us in this room, either before we became Christians or before we got serious about living a Christian life, we developed a vocabulary that was not Christian.

[6 : 30] And so sometimes, things don't go our way, something happens, and it's just automatic, saying words that really and truly don't please God.

It's just sort of a habit. I don't know if you're like me, but, you know, if I live long enough and develop a little bit of dementia or something like that, I'm scared to death of what's going to come out of my mouth.

Because I know all the words was pretty well well in most of them at one point in my life. That comes out.

If you, in your earlier days, had a problem with anger, you're going to struggle with anger. God will help us to deal with it, to grow. But there are certain things, sin patterns in your life that you struggle with.

And it may be some of your words are a part of that sin pattern. So, as we go through this, I want you to understand, our words, they are a reflection of what's in our heart.

[7 : 47] That's what Scripture says. That's what Jesus said. But we don't have pure hearts. We still have a problem with sin and selfishness and things that cause us to not think, speak perfectly, speak perfectly, or live perfectly like Jesus.

But I want you to let God show you, as we go through this, what the real condition of your heart is. Now, last week we began looking at the wrong use of words and address two that I want to state this way this week.

Malicious words. Gossip and slander. That's what we looked at last week. This week, last week I referred to them as the twin towers of destructive speech because that's what they are.

But I'm switching it because I couldn't think of a way to continue that analogy for this week. So last week we looked at malicious words, gossip and slander. Let's look first today at untruthful words.

The focus is going to be on lying. Old Testament scholar, Tremper Longman. In his commentary on Proverbs and Psalms, he listed about 20 verses in Proverbs that address the issue of untruthful speech.

[9 : 10] There may be more. But one sentence in Proverbs chapter 12 verse 22 indicates why lying is such a serious sin.

Look at it. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. The NIV says it this way, God detests lying lips.

We can trim it down even simpler. God hates. God despises lying lips. Now, why would the Scripture state so strongly God's hatred of our lying?

Well, first, it's totally contrary to His nature. You see, God's 100% truthful. That's just who He is. He can't help but be. He is God.

He cannot lie. He thinks. He speaks. He acts in ways that are totally honest and truthful, above board, total integrity. That's just God. Jesus, when He came into this world, He came as God in the flesh.

[10 : 22] John chapter 1, verse 1 says, The beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Jesus, when He came into the world, He took on human nature.

He became the God-man. And one of the ways Jesus described or explained who He was was in terms of He is truth.

Look at this. John chapter 14. You know this. Jesus said, I am the way and the truth and the life. That's just the nature of God.

And then the Bible is God's written Word and Jesus used the very word truth to describe God's Word in John 17, 17. He's praying.

Talking to His heavenly Father and He says, Your Word is truth. So, whenever we lie, whenever we're deceptive, whenever we are trying to conceal the truth, we are 180 degrees from what God is and what the Lord Jesus is and what the Word of God is.

[11 : 39] whenever we lie, we're acting totally contrary to God, His nature, His character, everything. So, here's what we need to think about here.

If you are a liar at heart, and some people are, you may have been around some people. A liar at heart is somebody who just thinks in terms of being deceptive, being dishonest.

Say whatever it takes to get my way. And truth doesn't matter. All you're concerned about are just a habitual liar, liar to the core. You're just worried about getting caught.

But it doesn't bother, if it doesn't bother you to lie, you cannot be a child of God. That's just as clear as clear can be.

Here's why. God's totally non-lying. Totally truthful. If we're children of God, it's because God has put His Spirit in us, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God.

[12 : 48] And if the Spirit of God lives within us, because we still have a sinful nature, we can lie.

And we do sometimes. But if we're Christians and we lie, sooner or later the Spirit of God is going to convict us, this is wrong, this is sinful, this is offensive to God.

And it becomes offensive to us because it's contrary to our true nature as Christians. And so if you can lie, boys and girls, teenagers, middle-aged people, old people, if you can lie and it doesn't bother you, it's just who you are, how you are, what you do, you cannot have the Spirit of God within you.

There is no way because the Spirit of God is all about truthfulness, honesty, integrity.

God hates lying because it's contrary to His nature. God hates lying because it is the nature of the devil. as Jesus pointed out in John chapter 8.

In that chapter, Jesus is having a confrontation with religious leaders, some Pharisees and others who are opposing Him, trying to undermine Him, trying to make people think He doesn't know what He's talking about, He's wrong, He's lying.

[14 : 18] They're trying to lead people astray, keep people from believing in Jesus, take them away from Him. And in the context of Him arguing with these people, telling them that they are liars, He says this about the devil, John 8, 44, when He lies, He speaks out of His own character, for He is a liar and the father of lying, lies.

Lying is a very serious problem because it originates with Satan. That's where we see it first in the Bible, Genesis chapter 3, the serpent tempts Eve.

If you are a liar at heart, then according to what Jesus told those Pharisees, your father is the devil, not God.

Now that's hard, but that's what Jesus Himself said to liars, people who knew they were, didn't care because it was going to further their agenda.

God is not your father, the devil is because he is a liar and the father of lies. It's obvious in just these two examples why God hates lying.

[15 : 45] But as children of God, understanding this, shouldn't lying bother us? Shouldn't lying be something that we hate as well?

It has to be, doesn't it? Lying is something we all need to take very seriously. It's something that we who influence children need to make sure they take seriously.

I'm talking to parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers, coaches. If you are an influencer of children, you need to really emphasize the importance of truth, being truthful.

Chuck Swindoll issues a good, important warning about children and lying. Look at what he says. He says, we do children no service by allowing them to ease out of responsibility for their lies.

Tolerance only produces a more mature and skilled liar. Let's think about this for a moment.

[16 : 59] Children will lie for all kinds of reasons just like adults do. people lie because of the fear of consequences because they want to avoid embarrassment maybe.

We lie just for basically selfish reasons. Whatever the reason is, you who influence children, when you find your child or a child you have influence responsible for, when you find that they lie, deal with it quickly and severely from a young age.

That is, whenever they tell their first lie. I don't know if you parents are like me. My boys were growing up. I made too many things that shouldn't have been issues.

I made them an issue. I died or shed blood, their blood, my blood, on too many hills when they were growing up.

I've got one of them in the service and he can tell you that's true. I had one in the first service. I told the first service, you can ask him, I did. Too many things mattered, I thought, when they were young.

[18:18] It really and truly did not matter. But lying is one. that always matters.

It is a hill worth spilling tons of blood on. Lying is something you bring out the nuclear arsenal to combat.

We're talking about lying. It originates in Satan. It is something that God abhors, hates, despises to the core of his being.

Deal with lying in your children and children you have influence over in an age appropriate way but don't let them get by with lying even one time.

As Swindoll says, tolerance only produces a more mature and skilled liar. If you let them get by with it at four, they'll be much more adept at it at 14.

[19:43] And by the time they go out from your home, they'll be masters of lying. that's why you do as that philosopher said, that great philosopher Barney Fyfe, you gotta nip it in the bud.

Lying is one, you gotta nip in the bud. Let's look at another wrong use of words. Self-promoting words, boasting, bragging words.

Proverbs has several warnings about promoting yourself, bragging on yourself, your accomplishments, things like this. Look at two examples, Proverbs 26, 12.

Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There's more hope for a fool than for him. 27, 2.

Let another praise you, not your own mouth, a stranger, not your own lips.

If you, if there's something about you, and there certainly is, but if there's something about you that's good, that ought to be noticed, good to be affirmed, you let somebody else do it.

[21:04] You don't do it. You let someone that doesn't have any kind of vested interest in you, let that stranger do it. That'll be the more sincere one.

The problem we're talking about here in these two verses, speaking to highly of ourselves or our accomplishments. He says it's very dangerous. There's more hope for a fool than for the person who is wise in his own eyes.

You know why it's so dangerous for us to be wise in our own eyes? Because we don't have 20-20 vision when we look at ourselves. Aren't we biased?

Aren't we biased? Do you know why the second great commandment says to love your neighbor as yourself? Because we love ourselves.

We do. That's why the word of God says love your neighbor as yourself because you're going to love yourself. And we love what we do, a lot of what we do, not everything.

[22:12] You know the other word that can be used to describe such boasting, it's pride. God has a real problem with pride. He hates it too.

There's a passage in Proverbs chapter 6 where there are seven things that God hates. Look at it with me. We're just going to look at two. There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him.

Haughty eyes, a lying tongue. Note the lying tongue is second here on the list. We already covered that. But the first is haughty eyes.

Some synonyms for haughty are proud, arrogant, conceited, self-important, stuck up.

You know what I'm talking about. You understand. God hates our prideful, arrogant, conceited attitudes and actions including our words.

[23:22] Why does God hate it? Well God hates pride like this because it's demonstrating an attitude of self-centeredness instead of God-centeredness.

See he's supposed to be the focus of our lives. Do all that we do for his glory. The greatest thing of all is to go and do his will. Well if we think we're the center of everything, if we think that we are self-sufficient, then our focus is just going to be on us and not him.

We're going to live to please ourselves. Just do what we want, when we want, how we want, with no thought of what God's desire, plan may be.

You know pride also affects our relationships with others. You know this, pride in relationship to others is sort of like an attitude of superiority. We think we're better than others.

We think we're more important than others. We think we've accomplished more than others. And when we have that attitude it causes us to look down on people or just ignore them.

[24 : 31] fail to notice, fail to love. A prideful person usually has a problem with authority. A prideful person, I know it all, I don't need anybody to tell me, a lot of times a prideful person just resents authority at every level of life.

The pride we're talking about, it comes out a lot of times in our words in relation to other people. We build ourselves up love, but we need some help so we put other people down.

That's what gossip does, that's what slander does, that's what lying about another person does.

Let's pause here and clarify that it's not prideful to acknowledge your talents, your abilities.

Because you have some. I said in the first service, these two young ladies, Sarah and Sabrina Stewart, they can sing, they can play musical instruments.

And for them to say, oh, I can't do anything, that'd just be foolish. They need to, they can acknowledge God has given them gifts, talents.

[25 : 54] God has given them the opportunity to develop those talents. And they've done very well in doing it. So it's not wrong for you, for me, for them, to acknowledge, I can do some things.

I'm pretty good at some things. I can, I have won some awards and so forth. When it becomes prideful is when we take credit for it, brag about it, as if we're the ones responsible.

We all need to never forget everything that you are, everything that you have, it originates from God. Paul addressed this to the Corinthian church because they had some pride problems over people, certain leaders.

And he made this statement in 1 Corinthians 4, what do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Acknowledge what God's given you, but give him the credit. Praise him. Thank him. Boys and girls, I have heard children actually say these words to me.

[27 : 15] I'm the smartest kid in my class. I'm the best player on my team. I've heard that.

Boys and girls, do not ever tell a human being in this world, I'm the best player on my team. I'm the smartest kid in my class.

That's just a prideful, arrogant, conceited statement for you to make. It's wrong. Now, if someone else tells you that, if one of your classmates, one of your teammates comes up to you and says, pats you on the back, boy, you're just the best player on our team.

You look at that person, you just say, thank you. Just say, thank you. If somebody comes up in the class and says, you're the smartest one on the team, just tell them, thank you.

And if you feel like, I just got to say something else, just say, I'm just thankful that the Lord gave me the ability to do that. Because if you're the best player on your team, who made you fast?

[28 : 36] Who made you athletic? If you're the smartest one in your class, who gave you the mind to do, make the grades and do what you do. Just say, thank you.

If you have to say more, thank God, acknowledge that it's a gift from Him. You're just thankful. But don't let it go to your head. Boys and girls, don't brag.

that's pride. And I want you to understand something. God hates to hear it coming out of your mouth. And your friends don't want to hear it either.

I want us all right now, let's think about some of the things we normally say. Listen carefully to yourself.

Do you hear that you're a boastful kind of person? Look carefully at yourself. Do you see some signs of pride?

[29 : 46] We all need to be on guard. It can creep in. It does at times with all of us. But pride will separate us from God quicker than anything else. James and Peter both in the New Testament tell us this, make it clear.

Look at what James says, just one sentence. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Peter, it really expands that. Look at what he says in 1 Peter 5. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because God opposes the proud but He gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time. You see in there, there's a solution to our pride problem.

Humble yourself under God's mighty hand. Humble yourself. It recognizes that God's God and you aren't. Recognize that who you are and what you are has been given to you by God.

There's no room for you to brag about it. Be prideful over it. How do you need to respond to what the Lord has said through His word this morning about the wrong use of your words in lying, in bragging?

[31 : 06] Has God convicted you? Has He made it clear to you that you've got a problem? You've got a problem with the truth.

You've got a problem with being prideful. Well, the way to respond is to just admit it to Him. Don't make excuses. Confess it to Him. Repent of it.

Change your mind. Turn from it. Ask Him to help you to see how bad it really is and turn from it. Stop it. Ask Him to give you the ability to think before you speak.

To help you to understand that everything you are and everything you have has been given to you by Him. Turn from your sin. Put your faith and trust in Jesus.

If you're not a Christian, think. When He died on the cross, He actually paid the penalty for my sin. He took my punishment. If you'll trust Him, you'll be forgiven because the penalty for your sin will be paid.

[32 : 11] So trust Him. Call upon Him to save you. If you are a Christian, but you realize I have developed, I have developed sort of a being loose with the truth.

Or I know that there's some pride issues in my life. Confess that to God. Truly repent of it. Ask Him to help you to truly turn.

And understand that when Jesus died for your sins, He paid the penalty. So accept your forgiveness and just ask God now to help you to be more sensitive to His Spirit, to be alert to times when you're tempted to tell a lie, to be alert to the pride issues in your life, the boasting temptations in your life, and ask Him to help you to say no to those.

To humble yourself. To speak the truth. Our words really do matter. They have an effect on many people as well as ourselves.

Our words matter because they reflect the true condition of our heart. That's why our words be used as a criteria for judgment on our judgment day.

[33 : 27] I want to conclude like I have with the last two messages. These chilling words of Jesus from Matthew chapter 12. I tell you on the day of judgment, people will give an account for every careless word they speak.

For by your words you will be justified. And by your words you will be condemned. Let's pray together. Father, show us how we should respond.

Show each individual in this room. Help us to do it. Help that person who is not a Christian to call upon Jesus right now to surrender their lives to Him as Lord.

Father, help that Christian who has been convicted this morning of their just plain selfishness, self-centeredness. They're just full of pride.

It comes out in their words and their actions. Convict that one who will lie to get out of suffering consequences, to avoid embarrassment.

[34 : 46] Dear God, draw them back to you. The God of truth. Draw them back to you. The source of all that they are, all that they have.

Draw them back and cause them to humble themselves before you. And seek your forgiveness. And renewed fellowship with you. Right now, in an attitude of prayer, let's just all listen to the Lord and respond to Him.

I'd be happy to pray with you, talk with you here at the front. You want to come down during this next few minutes as the musicians play. We're just going to be still and silent and pray before the Lord. Do it.