

CONTROLLING OUR TONGUES

There are many references in the scriptures to the tongue. We are familiar with many of them and their teachings on how we should control our tongues. I would suspect that many of us have gained this control - at least in some form. Foul language and filthy jokes are probably not part of our everyday communication. But is there more to controlling the tongue than this?

Proverbs 17:27-28 *"He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."*

Matthew 5:37 *"But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."*

James 1:19 *"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"*

Colossians 4:6 *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."*

Titus 2:7-8 *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."*

James 3:2 *"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."*

These verses focus on "sound speech", "speech with grace", not saying too much, and not speaking too quickly. Are these things part of our communication patterns?

Not only should we keep evil from our lips, but we should strive to always give a "sound" answer. We need to realize that it is okay not to answer quickly. (My Great Grandfather was known for spending much time in thought before answering a question. My parents and grandparents say that sometimes he would not answer you until the next day!) We also need to try not to say too

much. Remember, Jesus said that evil comes of more than 'yes' or 'no'.

With so many scriptures related to the tongue, I think we should all examine our communication patterns and see if we are in line with what the Bible teaches. "Sound speech", "with grace" is not just refraining from evil. It is also not something that comes naturally, but is something that we achieve through effort. As we've said many times, "with His help", we can control our tongues!

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A CRITICAL LOOK AT HOMOSEXUALITY

Contrary to present-day, alarmingly growing acceptance, improper and immoral sexual behavior is contrary to both nature and the Scriptures. Recent assertions disputing Biblical regulations are found to be not only unfounded, but in sharp contradiction to what the Bible actually requires. They are a blatant denial of the obvious and indicate absolute disregard of the truth.

Early evidence of such an unnatural act is recorded in Genesis 19:4-11. The term "*know them*" (v.5) is clearly explained in Gen. 4:1 and 17 to refer to a sexual relationship. "Know" is simply the present tense of "knew." In both verses a child was born as a result of the stated behavior.

The intent of the men of Sodom is referred to as "*wickedly*" (v.7). Jude 7 refers to this behavior in Sodom as "*going after strange flesh*." The word 'strange' is defined from the Greek *eteras* (Strong 2087) as 'other.' The meaning, therefore, is flesh other than that which is natural.

2 Peter 2:6 refers to the condition at Sodom and Gomorrrha as being "*an example unto those that after should live ungodly*" while the next verse terms their behavior as "*filthy conversation [manner of life] of the wicked*" (v.7). A similar situation to that of Sodom is found in Judges 19:22-23.

There was an unquestionable prohibition of homosexuality activity. (See Leviticus 18:22-23.) Leviticus 20:13 exacts the

death penalty upon homosexuals among the Hebrews. *"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them [both men] have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."*

Paul writes in unmistakable condemnation of unnatural sexual behavior. Read Romans 1:24-28.

Note Paul's vivid description of this evil conduct: *"Women did change the natural use into that which is against nature"* (v.26). The natural, intended use was with a husband, not another woman.

"Men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their own lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly" (v.27). The natural use of the woman was discarded and instead men behaved with other men such as was intended only with a wife.

Paul refers to those who so act as: failing *"to retain God in their knowledge"* (v.28), having *"a reprobate mind"* (v.28), and doing *"those things which are not convenient"* (v.28). Then Paul warns, *"They which commit such things are worthy of death"* (v.32).

1 Corinthians 6:9, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"* Then Paul includes in the list of unrighteous deeds, *"Abusers of themselves with mankind."*

The Revised Standard Version translates this phrase as "homosexuals." The New International Version as "homosexual offenders." The New American Standard Version as "homosexuals." The New King James as "effeminate homosexuals, nor sodomites." The King James II as "homosexuals."

1 Timothy 1:8-10, *"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made ... for them that defile themselves with mankind."*

The Revised Standard Version at this verse uses the word "sodomites." The New International Version, "perverts." The New American Standard, "homosexuals." The New King James, "sodomites." The King James II, "homosexuals."

Evident Conclusion: Homosexuals were stoned to death under the Old Law. For those living under Jesus' New Law Paul warns, *"They which commit such things are worthy of death"* (Romans 1:32).

Seeing that we as Christians cannot exercise stoning as those in the Old Testament, we must conclude that homosexuals are condemned by God to eternal death in the hereafter.

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GET SOMEBODY ELSE

The Lord had a job for me,
But I had so much to do,
I said, "You get somebody else
Or wait till I get through."
I don't know how the Lord came out,
But He seemed to get along,
But I felt kind of sneaking like –
I knew I'd done God wrong.

One day I needed the Lord –
Needed Him right away;
But He never answered me at all,
And I could hear Him say
Down in my accusing heart:
"Sorry! I've got too much to do;
You get somebody else,
Or wait till I get through."

Now, when the Lord has a job for me,
I never try to shirk;
I drop whatever I have on hand,
And do the good Lord's work.
And my affair can run along,

Or wait till I get through;
Nobody else can do the work
That God marked out for you.

--Paul Lawrence Dunbar--

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
May 2 – 7	Van Lear, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 7 – 9	Fayetteville Rd. Church Fairburn, GA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 17 – 21	Hopkinsville, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 28 – 30	Willow Oaks Church Russell Springs, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 6 – 11	Taylors Crossroads Church Roanoke, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 13 – 18	Mt. Carmel Church Woodland, AL	Various speakers
June 20 – 25	Ephesus, GA	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. In the Old Testament, was Saul a prophet or a king?
2. Where among men does Job declare wisdom and understanding are found?

3. The Son of Man spoke to John in Revelation 1 saying He had the keys of what?
4. When people of Nazareth tried to kill Jesus by throwing Him off a cliff, what did He do?
5. Why did Naomi encourage her two daughter-in-laws to remain in Moab?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How did Aaron explain to Moses where the golden calf came from? HE SAID IT CAME OUT OF THE FIRE (Exo. 32:34)
2. What time of day did several women go to the tomb of Jesus to put spices on it? EARLY IN THE MORNING (Lk. 24:1)
3. What kind of animal did Jesus call Herod? FOX (Lk. 13:31-32)
4. What did the Psalmist ask God to create within him? A PURE HEART (Psa. 51:10)
5. What news had Eli just received when he fell back and broke his neck? THAT THE ARK OF GOD HAD BEEN CAPTURED (1 Sam. 4:18)

[Editor's Note: About 18 months ago I started a new job which has demanded a lot of my time (overtime, etc.). Unfortunately I have not done a very good job with my correspondence regarding The Harvester and especially with sending Thank you notes to those who have contributed to this work. I would now like to take this opportunity to do so. My appreciation goes to the following congregations: Taylors Crossroads, West Broad Street, and Napoleon. Other churches have made offers to help too. Thanks also to the following individuals (in alphabetical order): Winton Carson, J.P. Cook, Denson Dunlap, Sandra Harmon, Loraine Howell, Jean Kennard, Bill Luttrell, Mrs. Curtis Messer, Foy Mitchell, J.W. Moore, Lily Sandusky, Marie Strain, Jim Tom Willingham, and Joe & Clara Young. As best as I can remember, these are ones who have contributed within the past 18 months but I failed to express my written gratitude. Please continue to pray for this paper.]