

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

Realizing the Surpassing Value of Knowing Jesus Christ Our Lord

Becoming Like Christ: Managing the Tongue

James 3: 5-8

Introduction: It is important to bear in mind the goal, lest we become lost in the details: We are considering Paul's great ambition to know Jesus Christ and to be found in Him having the righteousness that comes by faith (as opposed to self effort), Philippians 3. While not directly referenced in the passage from Philippians, Paul has a great deal to say about how and what we speak. In fact, the whole Bible has a great deal to say about this. It is evident that growth in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus Christ must eventually get around to godliness of words and speech.

I. James 3:1-12—The Classical Passage in the New Testament Regarding Speech

- A. Strong admonition to those who teach (v 1)
- B. An amazing statement about control of the tongue (v. 2)
- C. Startling analogies regarding the power of the tongue (vv. 3-6; 11-12)
- D. The truth about taming the tongue (vv. 7-10)

II. Paul's Admonition About Our Speech (Ephesians 4:29-5:4; Colossians 3:8-13)

- A. The opposite of Christ-like Character
 1. Unwholesome words (rotten words) (Eph 4:29)
 2. Filthiness & silly talk (Eph 5:4) — base or foolish, literally *moronic*
 3. Coarse jesting (Eph 5:4) — *ready wit that is sexual or at another's expense*
 4. Slander & abusive speech (Col 3:8) — *harshly critical or exploitative of another*
 5. Words that are lies (Col 3:9)
- B. The Positive of Christ-like Character
 1. A word that is good for edification
 2. Spoken according to the need of the moment
 3. A word that will give grace to those who hear it
 4. Words that express thankfulness, the positive aspects of any situation

III. The Testimony of Jesus Christ

^bThe words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

"He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."

Conc: (1) James states quite clearly that no one can tame the tongue...if it is to be brought under control, it will only be done as a result of death to one's old nature and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This, most certainly, is having a righteousness not my own.

(2) The control of the tongue is vital, because we are able, through our words, to bring a blessing or a curse. The power of words have long lasting effect and may even bless, or haunt, a person their entire life.

(3) Grace, blessings, and thankfulness are the essence of Christ's control of our speech and the development of His character within. We look most like Christ when we talk like Him.

James 1:26 *If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.*

James 3:5 *So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. ⁸ But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.*

Ephesians 4:29 *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

John 14:10 & 24 ^b*The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."*

