

# Tongue Abuse

“Many things are opened by mistake,  
but none so frequently as the mouth”

1. Ex.20:7, do not take name of LORD in vain...;  
16, do not bear false witness...
2. Pr.6:16-19, three things that God hates  
concern the tongue . . .
  - A lying tongue
  - A false witness who speaks lies
  - One who sows discord among brethren
3. Ro.3:10-18

# I The Tongue is Good

# Gn.1:31, everything God made is good

- Prov.18:21, a matter of death and life . . .
  - Ahikar: ‘My son, sweeten thy tongue, and make savory the opening of thy mouth; for the tail of a dog gives him bread, and his mouth gets him blows.’
- Prov.18:7, snare of his soul
  - “A fool’s talk gets him into trouble” – Moffatt
  - “One who doesn’t guard his tongue digs his own grave”
  - Mt.12:36-37

I The Tongue is Good

II Many Misuse  
the Tongue

- Ps.34:13, Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit
- Prov.14:9, Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge

- Ep.5:4, three terms only here in NT
  1. Filthiness: disgraceful speech, obscenity, shamefulness
  2. Foolish talking: silly talk, jesting. Silly twaddle
  3. Coarse jesting: crude joking, vulgar talk. Lit., turn a phrase; double entendre
- “All three terms refer to a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar conversation” – O’Brian
- Laughing at sin adds to guilt. Prov.14:9
- Lk.6:45

- Ps.34:13, Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit
- Prov.14:9, Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge [= Ep.5:4]
- 1 Tim.5:13, They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not [Prov.7:21]
- Ja.1:26, If anyone among you thinks he is religious, a does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless



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**III Abusing the Tongue  
Abuses Others**

## Psalm 41:4-9, wounds deeply

- Joseph, Gn.39:14-18
- Moses, Num.16:3, 13
- Naboth, 1 K.21:9-14
- Job, 2:9-10
- Jeremiah, 18:18
- Jesus, Jn.8:48
- Christians, 1 Pt.2:12, 15

Example and tongue control  
reveal true character

## Proverbs 16:27, digs up evil

- Like burning fire ... has to have relief
- Tit.3:2, *speaks evil of no one*

## Proverbs 16:28, separates friends

## Proverbs 18:8, encourages others to sin

- Acts 17:21

Pitcher – Catcher

Speaker – Audience

Passer – Receiver

Gossip – listener

What about James 1:19 – *swift to hear*?

- Also, *slow to speak*
- Mt.10:16, wise as serpents
- Do not allow heart to become a receptacle for people's trash. Prov.18:8
- Do not believe everything you hear
- Two things we can do to fight gossip –
  - a. Correct it: 2 Th.3:11-12
  - b. Avoid it: Prov.20:19

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**IV Profanity: Common  
Form of Tongue Abuse**

# Ex.20:7, a very old problem

Two sins –

- Use God's name in false swearing, Lv.19:12a
- Use God's name in profanity, Lv.19:12b

## Prov.30:8-9

- England (1745): Profane Oaths Act
  - We fine those who dump garbage in public
  - We quarantine diseased people . . .

“I am sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane swearing, a vice heretofore little known in the American army, is growing into fashion. I hope that the officers will, by example and influence, endeavor to check it; and that both they and the men will reflect, that we have but little hope of the blessing of heaven on our arms, if we insult Him by our impiety and folly. Added to this it is a vice so mean and low . . . that every man of sense and character detests and despises it” – G. Washington, 1776

## Ep.4:29, a very old problem

Includes euphemisms: *good* + *voice: to speak*

- Substitutes milder word for evil one
- Minces words [lessen the force of; weaken]
  - E.g.: I minced no words...
- All are concerned about words and people's perception. 'Gay' . . . 'Groovy'
- May not like the dictionary definition . . .
  - Can't change it
  - Usually reflects current usage



## A representative list...

- a. Darn, Dern, Durn, Dang = DAMN
- b. Heck = HELL
- c. Gosh = GOD
- d. Gosh sake = GOD'S SAKE
- e. Golly = GOD (a mild oath)
- f. Gol = GOD [also *gad*, *gadzooks*]
- g. Goldarn / Goldang / Goldern = GOD + DAMN
- h. Holy Cow = Holy Christ (minced oath, euphemism)

## A representative list...

- i. Holy Cats = Holy God
- j. Holy Gumdrops = Holy God
- k. Doggone = God + Damn
- l. Jimmy (Jiminy / Jimminy) Crickets, or Jimmy Christmas = Jesus Christ [orig.: Jesu Domini]
- m. Gee / Jee Jeez / Jeepers = JESUS
- n. In some exclamatory phrases expressing surprise, consternation, etc. (good gracious! good grief): good, a euphemism for GOD – e.g.: “My goodness” = minced oath (‘My God’)

## Psalm 141

3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice wicked works With men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

3: mouth control . . . . . 4: mind control

‘The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.’