

“Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 6: Holy In Word



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 6: Holy In Word

Learn how to be holy in word by putting all your words to the test, clinging to the words that are good, and abstaining from all the words that are evil

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Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW126

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God’s word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God’s word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God’s instructions.

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“Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 6:

Holy In Word

“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:13-16).

The Christian’s life is expected to be different from the ways of the world – and from the ways in which he/she lived prior to becoming a Christian. The life of a Christian is a holy life that is patterned after God’s holiness!

To be holy is to be separate or set apart. In the spiritual sense, it refers to our responsibility to be separate from the ways of the world (the ways that are common, profane, and sinful) in order to be entirely devoted to God! The standard that must be used to determine our holiness is God (who is perfectly holy), and the message that He has revealed to mankind. Furthermore, it is only by the grace of God that we can be made holy after we have sinned – and that grace which has been shown toward us ought to provoke us to giving our lives entirely to the service of the Lord! Our continued responsibility, then, is to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1).

But, what does perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord really look like? Previously, I suggested that 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 should be used as a

model for perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. This passage says, “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” We saw that this model involves three steps: Test, Cling, and Abstain.

To test means that we must examine everything in order to see its true nature (whether it is pleasing to God or not pleasing to Him). Then, we must cling (hold fast) to everything that is found to be in harmony with the will of God (that is, we must make it part of who we are and what we do). And, we must abstain (get away) from everything that is not found to be in harmony with the will of God (that is, we must give it no place in who we are and what we do).

This model has wide-reaching implications for our lives – in our thoughts, in our words, and in our conduct. During this section of lessons, we are spending our time evaluating each one of these three areas in order to see how we can be holy! This lesson will focus on our words.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how we can be holy in our words by putting all things to the test, clinging to what is in harmony with God’s will, and abstaining from that which is contrary to God’s will.

Test

We must test/evaluate our words. The words that we speak are important to God – as He tells us that they are powerful to accomplish a great deal. They can either be used to accomplish things that are pleasing to God or they can be used to accomplish purposes that do not please God. Therefore, as we evaluate our words, recognize that we must be willing to evaluate every area of our words in order to see whether they are pleasing to God or not. We must not intentionally overlook *any* area. And, also remember that the standard for evaluating our words must be God’s word. Only this will help us to perfectly understand which words are pleasing to God and which words are not pleasing to God.

The importance of our words

As we begin evaluating our words, we must understand their importance. Our words, as we will see, reveal what is in our hearts. And, they will impact whether we are truly living holy lives or not. I believe that a few simple points will help us to understand the importance of our words.

(1) The Bible presents a clear standard for the way in which we must be speaking. In this lesson, we will be considering some specific elements of our speech the Bible instructs us to cling to. For now, we must recognize that God will judge us – even for the words that we use during our lives!

2 Corinthians 5:10 is a general passage that indicates we will be held accountable to God for everything that we have done during the course of our lifetimes. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” This will include the words that we have said.

Specifically, Matthew 12:36 indicates that we will give an account on the Day of Judgment for “every idle word” we speak. The word “idle” refers to something that is lazy, unemployed, or useless. So, an idle *word* would be a word that is useless, thoughtless, and something that accomplishes no good. Seriously consider the warning, then, that is contained within this passage. You will be held accountable to God for every word you speak that accomplishes no good!

Of course, as with everything in life, the Bible is the standard by which we will be judged – as it is the standard for holiness (Revelation 20:11-15)! Our words are not made “right” because we *feel* that they are right, or because we have been *told* by someone else that they are right, etc. Instead, our words are only “right” in God’s sight if they are according to His standard of holiness and righteousness!

(2) The Bible teaches that our words reveal our thoughts. Consider Matthew 12:33-37: “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil,

speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Remember that the word “heart” is often used in the Bible as performing functions of the mind. Recognize, then, the important principle that is identified in this passage: Good fruit comes from good (healthy) trees and bad fruit comes from bad (unhealthy) trees.

The same thing is true of our lives regarding our hearts and our words. Remember what we discussed in our previous lesson regarding our thoughts (from Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 15:18-19). We saw that everything we are stems from the heart. Now, this principle is specifically applied to our words. If we are always speaking words that are holy and pleasing to God, it is because our hearts are holy and pleasing to God. If, however, we find ourselves engaged in filthy speech, gossip, lying, and other sins of the tongue, it is because our hearts are *not* holy and pleasing to God. So, as is true in every area of our lives, if we want to be pleasing and holy in the sight of God, our hearts must first be holy and pleasing to God!

Consider, then, the importance of exercising care regarding the kind of speech we hear! Remember, our sense of hearing is one of the ways in which things gain access into our minds. It is one of the “entrance gates” I spoke of in the previous lesson. So, we need to be careful what kind of language we *willingly* subject ourselves to from entertainment sources (i.e. television, radio, music, etc.). We need to choose our friends wisely (1 Corinthians 15:33) – and not *willingly* spend time around those who are using sinful language (unless we are actively trying to change them). We also need to *do our best* to remove ourselves from situations and environments in which sinful language is being used (i.e. by asking the sinful language to stop, leaving the room, etc.).

Remember the principle: Garbage in, garbage out! While this is not always true in our lives (because we can choose *not* to be involved in the sinful things around us), it is generally true! The more that we are *willing* to put ourselves around sin, the more we will tend to become desensitized to sin – often resulting in imitating the same kinds of sinful speech/behavior.

(3) The Bible teaches that our words are powerful. Consider what is taught in James 3:1-12: “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”

This passage demonstrates the power of the tongue (particularly its destructive power), even though it is a small member of the human body. This point is made by comparing the tongue to (1) horses that are controlled by small bits put inside their mouths, (2) large ships that are driven by a small rudder, and (3) great forest fires that begin as only small fires. So, even though the tongue is a very small member of our physical bodies, they have the potential to cause much destruction if they are not properly controlled!

In addition to its destructive power, the Bible also teaches the great power for good that the tongue has! Proverbs 15:23 says, “A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” Proverbs 25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver.” Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.” Proverbs 15:1 says, “A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Furthermore, this passage (James 3) demonstrates the difficulty involved in controlling our tongues. I believe the phrase “no man can tame the tongue” (James 3:8) means that we cannot tame it to the point that we do not need to exercise constant watchfulness over it! It is possible to make wild and fierce animals tame (though they still require the proper care). However, the tongue can never be left to its own devices! We must exercise constant watch care over it! We must be diligent to exercise the proper self-discipline over the tongue – because we must not be hypocritical and allow our tongues to speak words of praise to God and then use them against our fellow man!

So, we must be diligent and recognize the destructive power possessed by the words that we use – as well as the power for good that is possessed by our words! The Christian, of course, must be dedicated to using his/her words for good – and for nothing that is sinful! Therefore, the Christian must learn to be “slow to speak,” choosing his/her words very carefully and sparingly. James 1:19 says, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” Proverbs 10:19 says, “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.” Proverbs 17:27 says, “He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.”

Our words must be transformed

The transformation that is required of Christians involves the renewing of our minds. We considered this as part of our previous study. Go back and review Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24, and Colossians 3:1-4.

Then, as you consider some of the passages that describe the Christian's transformation, you should notice that words are involved in this! Ephesians 4:25-32 demonstrates that there are some sins of the tongue that must be put away and replaced with things that are right in God's sight. Ephesians 5:3-4 identifies some ways of speaking that are part of the old man that must not even be named among the saints (as they are not fitting for God's holy people/saints). Colossians 3:8-9 also identifies some ways of speaking that are part of the old man that must not be part of the transformed life of a Christian.

The Christian, then, must be devoted to restraining his/her tongue from speaking evil. 1 Peter 3:10 says, "For 'He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.'" Psalm 39:1 describes the type of dedication we need to have: "I said, 'I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me.'" In order to accomplish this challenging task, let us petition the help of our Heavenly Father, like the Psalmist did in Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 141:3-4.

Cling

There are a number of things that are specifically mentioned in the Scriptures that are approved of God related to our speech. We need to hold to these things – because they will help us please God! Now, we will certainly not talk about every single element of speech that is appropriate and right in the sight of God (that will take an ongoing study of the Scriptures and constant evaluation of our words). However, we will identify some specific things that are identified in the Scriptures as being approved of God.

Worship

What better use of our tongues is there than to use them to worship our Creator? Hebrews 13:15 says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips,

giving thanks to His name." We should be engaged in praising God with our mouths frequently! Involved in this should also be the giving of thanks to God. Ephesians 5:4 says, "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

How often do you offer the fruit of your lips to God? This could be done by praying to Him. This could be done by singing praises to His glorious name. This could be done by preaching His saving message to others around us. Regardless of how we accomplish it (as long as it is in accordance with the way of truth), we must be diligent in offering praises to God!

Sound speech that cannot be condemned

Titus 2:6-8 describes the commitment that young, male Christians ought to have to personal purity as members of a local body of Christ: "Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you." While this instruction regarding speech is specifically applicable to young Christian men, it is in full harmony with the general standard the Scriptures present concerning the way every Christian ought to be speaking. In fact, let's use this as a standard to evaluate our speech by in every area!

The instruction is that they use "sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you." The overall life of the Christian who is committed to holiness will result (like Jesus) in one's opponents having no reasonable objection against him! Certainly, an important element of this is the way in which one speaks. For, if an individual was guilty of sins of the tongue, then his/her opponents could have a reasonable complaint against him/her.

Now, let's focus on the specific instruction regarding our speech. It is to be "sound speech that cannot be condemned." (1) It is speech that is sound (entirely healthy and pure, with no mixture of error in it). (2) It is speech that can have nothing evil truly

said against it – because there is no mixture of error in it. So, our speech must not be “pushing the boundaries” between what we believe is acceptable and unacceptable speech. Instead, our speech focuses on that which we know to be entirely pure and holy! As you speak, you should ask yourself if your speech is “sound speech that cannot be condemned.”

Speech seasoned with salt

Colossians 4:6 describes the way in which Christians ought to speak – with a particular focus toward those who are not Christians (though this would certainly apply to our discourse with Christians also). “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”

You should consider this statement in its context to glean a specific point (as it is made in the context of teaching those who are “outside” of Jesus Christ). Christians must consider their speech – even when they are talking around those who are not Christians, because their speech has an influence on them. Even in our speech, Christians have the responsibility to be the “light of the world” and the city that is set on a high hill that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:13-16). We should be providing a contrast between speaking like the world speaks and speaking like God wants us to speak!

In a general sense, we need to apply this instruction to every area of our speech. Our speech must be with grace. That is, our speech must be fitting with the God-given standard for His people (those who have received His grace). Our speech must not sound the same as those who have never accessed the grace of God! Our speech must also be as if it was “seasoned with salt.” Our speech, therefore, must not be bitter or harmful to others. Instead, it must be “palatable” and helpful to those who hear (note that this can still be true even if our words are not what others *want* to hear).

Full of the word of God

Just as we must use our tongues to praise God, we must use our tongues to spread His saving message to others! After all, it is through the “foolishness of the message preached” that God has

chosen to have His saving message spread to others (1 Corinthians 1:21; also see Romans 10:13-18). So, His people today must realize that it is their responsibility to use their words to help others come to learn and obey God’s saving message!

Therefore, we must be devoted to this work of spreading God’s message to those we come into contact with! Jeremiah 20:9 describes the attitude of the prophet Jeremiah, who (even though he tried) could not keep himself from speaking the message of God: “Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name.’ But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not.” Similarly, the apostle Paul said that he was ready to preach the gospel of Christ, because he realized that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe (Romans 1:15-17)!

Words of edification to the hearers

As we’ve already discussed, our words are powerful in accomplishing good. We can even use our words to build others up spiritually! Perhaps we know that someone is going through a difficult time. Our words have the power to turn away depression and make their hearts glad (Proverbs 12:25)! This is why the Proverbs teach the value of a word that is “fitly spoken” (Proverbs 15:23; Proverbs 25:11)!

We must always be concerned about speaking words that build others up spiritually. And, we must never be involved in speaking words that bring about the spiritual ruin of those who hear. For instance, 2 Timothy 2:14 identifies the fact that it is possible to speak in a way that ruins the hearers: “Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.” In fact, Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Now, please understand that simply because someone may not *like* what is said does not mean that it is sinful speech. Edification simply has to do with building others up spiritually. So, even if you rebuke someone for his/her sin (which the Bible commands), it is still speaking words of edification –

because it is for his/her spiritual benefit! Christians simply **must** be concerned with the spiritual well-being of others and be prepared to serve those who are in need (even through our encouraging words)!

Words of truth

Christians have the responsibility of putting off the sinful ways of deceit and lying, and putting on the ways of speaking truth with all men! Ephesians 4:25 indicates that this is so (as well as many other passages). It says, “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor....’”

Christians must have no part in slander (lying about other people) or in deceiving others (see Romans 1:29)! It is simply *not* OK for a Christian to tell a lie or to mislead others for *any* reason! Instead, the Christian is expected to tell complete truth *always*! Remember, there is no such thing as a “pure/harmless lie” (a.k.a. “white lie”).

Let your “yes” be “yes”

In Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus forbade making oaths. He said, “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

Jesus described that these types of oaths would be made, swearing by someone greater than themselves. However, Jesus also demonstrated the foolishness involved in this by pointing out that they are not in full control – regardless of what they swear by.

Instead, Jesus said that we are to simply allow our “yes” to mean “yes” – and our “no” to mean “no.” So, we must simply allow our words to mean what they say! Notice that Jesus said, “whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”

Abstain

In contrast with these uses of our words that are approved of God, there are a number of things that are specifically mentioned in the Scriptures that are not approved of God, as related to our speech. We need to keep away from these things – because they will not help us please God! Now, we will certainly not talk about every single element of speech that is inappropriate and sinful in the sight of God (that will take an ongoing study of the Scriptures and constant evaluation of our words). However, we will identify some specific things that are identified in the Scriptures as not being approved of God.

Filthy and corrupt words

Ephesians 4:29 identifies “corrupt” words as part of the speech that was found in the old man of sin – and not in the new man who has been transformed to walk according to the instructions of God. Paul instructed, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth....” The word “corrupt” refers to something that is rotten, corrupted, bad, worthless, and not fit for use. Certainly, much of the way that the world speaks would fit into this general category. Such as: Using God’s name in vain, profanity, gossip, euphemisms, etc. This is simply not the way of the Christian’s speech!

Ephesians 5:4 also identifies filthiness and foolish talking as part of the old man of sin. Ephesians 5:3-4 says, “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” First, the term “filthiness” refers to shamefulness and obscenity. This shameful or obscene conduct could be in thought, in word, or in deed – as they are all not pleasing to God. As the term “filthiness” implies, it is contrary to the way of purity (in thought, in deed, and in word). However, this term (in this context) appears to have specific application to the use of our words. So, our words must be in keeping with God’s standard for holiness and not in ways of shamefulness and obscenity. Second, foolish talking would refer to words that are both foolish and sinful,

reflecting the foolishness of our hearts. These things (according to Ephesians 5:3-4) must not even be named among the saints – as they are not fitting for the way God expects Christians to conduct themselves!

Though these terms are quite general in nature, they would certainly have application to the specific areas we are now going to begin considering. So, even though I may not reference these passages at those times, please keep them in your mind and make these applications. Remember, these things are not fitting for those who are God's holy people.

Profanity

The word “profanity” identifies speech that is offensive. Now, it is important to recognize that the Bible does not condemn all speech simply because it is offensive to others. For instance, when Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees of His day, His disciples recognized that they were offended by what Jesus had said (Matthew 15:12). However, the distinction lies in the fact that Jesus was accomplishing God's will by teaching them the way of truth and was not at all going against God's standard for holiness. Yet, there are a number of words/phrases we can use that do go against God's standard for holiness because they demonstrate to others a willingness to use offensive language as part of one's vocabulary.

You probably know the terms that are generally recognized as being “profanity.” I do not need to spell them out for you in this lesson. If, by chance, you are not sure what these terms are, a quick internet search will get you started to learn some terms you need to avoid! If we decide to go ahead and use these terms that are considered to be offensive to others, we will have greater difficulty showing Christ to them! Therefore, we do need to seriously consider how those who hear us speak consider the terms that we use. However, even if those we are talking with do not recognize certain terms as being vulgar language, we will still be setting a bad example for them (demonstrating to them that we are willing to use terms that are offensive to others). This is not the way of holiness. Remember, the term “holy” implies being separated

from all that which is evil and dedicated to that which is good!

Using God's name in vain

Under the Old Testament, the Israelites (who were supposed to be God's holy people) were specifically instructed not to take God's holy name in vain. Exodus 20:7 says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Leviticus 19:12 says, “And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.”

Instead, of taking God's name in vain, they needed to remember that God's name is holy and reverend (awesome)! Psalm 111:9 says, “He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome is His name.” To use God's name in vain, then, would be to use it in a way that is worthless and empty of its full meaning!

Where is the holiness in using God's holy and awesome name in a way that is empty and devoid of its full meaning? Again, God directly condemns such corrupt (worthless) speech, as we observed in Ephesians 4:29. Speaking in this way simply does not show that we truly recognize the magnificence of God! Instead, many use the word “God” as a meaningless expression about their frustration, surprise, etc. So, I ask you to consider: Whenever you use the name of God (or even the term “God”), evaluate whether you are really using it in a way that brings honor to Him – or if you are using it in a way that is lower than its true magnificence!

Euphemisms

A euphemism is a term that is used as a substitute for profanity that is usually considered less offensive and more acceptable. For every one term of profanity, there are many euphemistic expressions that are substituted for the same! There are even euphemistic terms/expressions that are used to take God's name in vain.

How do you know whether a term is a euphemistic expression or not? Some terms we hear frequently, but we may not view them as being terms

of profanity. Yet, we must not just give these words a “pass.” We must be diligent to evaluate *every* word we speak, recognizing that we will be held accountable before God for our words (Matthew 12:36)! Simply ask yourself whether the terms you use are substitutes for profanity or for taking God’s name in vain. Some examples of euphemistic expressions are: “OMG,” “shoot,” and many others I do not wish to write. Again, there are many websites that will demonstrate words that are used in euphemistic ways, helping you even to see which words/phrases they are substitutes for.

While some may view this as being too “strict” or just knit-picking, this is really about the need for us to be holy in our speech! How can we consider our speech to be holy if we are trying to curse – without really cursing? You see, holiness is *not* about trying to get as close to the “line” between right and wrong as we can get! Instead, we should have the desire to get as far away from evil as we can possibly get. Remember, we must abstain from “every form” of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) – not just the “really bad” kinds of evil!

Gossip

Gossip is useless talk or rumor, especially regarding the personal or private affairs of others. We must recognize that gossip is *not* just about contributing to the spread of false information (though it is often manifested as such). Instead, gossip can also occur when we are spreading information that is true! Gossip (also consider the Bible terms “whisperers” and “busybodies”) is always condemned in the Bible (i.e. Romans 1:29; 1 Timothy 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15).

Gossip is simply not fitting with God’s standard for holiness in our speech! Not only is it directly condemned in the Scriptures, but it is contrary to the instructions of God to speak things that edify (Ephesians 4:29)! Gossip is distinguished from other forms of speech in its intent. The intent of gossip is not to bring about anything that is constructive and spiritually helpful. Instead, the intent is just to talk about someone else, to tear down someone’s reputation, to be popular with others, to spread news about others just for the sake of spreading news, etc. So, gossip reflects a heart that

does not have the best interest of others as a primary concern!

Coarse jesting

Coarse jesting is also condemned in Ephesians 5:4. It is included in the speech that has no part in the Christian’s life. This, along with the other sins listed in this passage, will keep us out of the kingdom of Christ and God!

Coarse jesting implies witty speech that is not fitting with the grace and love which ought to flavor the Christian’s every word! This may be manifested in the use of “suggestive humor” (suggestive of things that are not pure), double or hidden meanings (which are not pure), etc. The NIV (2011) translates this word, “coarse joking.” So, this term applies to any attempt at humor or the use of one’s wit that runs contrary to the purity God expects from His people in their speech. Again, this kind of speech is contrary to the way of God (His standard for our holiness)!

Conclusion

In this lesson, we have observed: (1) That we must put all of our words to the test, recognizing the importance of the words we use. (2) That the Scriptures identify many words that are according to the will of God we must be diligent to cling to. And, (3) that the Scriptures identify many words that are contrary to the will of God we must be diligent to abstain from.

Have you been pressing toward perfect holiness? We must always remember the power of our words – and that we will be held accountable for the words that we have used during our lives when we stand before the throne of God on the Day of Judgment! In all areas, we must be using sound speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 2:8).

Are you perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord by being holy in word (testing every word, clinging to the good, and abstaining from every form of evil)? If not, make your life right with Him today! Determine that you will use your words to accomplish the purposes of God today. Do not delay!

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2)!

Study Questions

What does it mean to be holy?

What is your responsibility to be holy throughout your life?

1. Test

What is the importance of your words?

What is the importance of being transformed in your speech?

2. Cling

What kind of words must you cling to?

Explain the following types of words you must cling to:

1. Worship –

2. Sound speech that cannot be condemned –

3. Seasoned with salt –

4. Full of the word of God –

5. Words of edification to the hearers –

6. Words of truth –

7. Let your “yes” be “yes” –

3. Abstain

What kind of words must you abstain from?

Explain the following types of words you must abstain from:

1. Filthy and corrupt words –

2. Profanity –

3. Using God’s name in vain –

4. Euphemisms –

5. Gossip –

6. Coarse jesting –