



Does God Care About The Words I Use?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Does God care about the words I use? The Bible teaches that the words that I 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 you evaluate your words, recognize that you must be willing to evaluate every area of your words in order to see whether they are pleasing to God or not. You must not intentionally overlook *any* area. And, also recognize that the standard for evaluating your words must be God's word. Only this will help you to perfectly understand which words are pleasing to God and which words are not pleasing to God.

The Importance Of My Words

As you begin evaluating your words, you must understand their importance. Your words, as you will see, reveals what is in your heart. And, they will impact whether you are truly living a holy life or not. I believe that a few simple points will help you to understand the importance of your words.

(1) The Bible presents a clear standard for the way in which you must speak. You must recognize that God will judge you – even for the words that you use during your life! 2 Corinthians 5:10 is a general passage that indicates you will be held accountable to God for everything that you have done during the course of your lifetime. “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 you have said.

Specifically, Matthew 12:36 indicates that you will give an account on the Day of Judgment for “every idle word” you speak. The word “idle” refers to something that is lazy, unemployed, or useless. So, an idle *word* is a word that is useless, thoughtless, and 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 you will be judged – as it is the standard for holiness (Revelation 20:11-15)! Your words are not made “right” because you *feel* that they are right, or because you have been *told* by someone else that they are right, etc. Instead, your words are only “right” in God’s sight if they are according to His standard of holiness and righteousness!

(2) The Bible teaches that your words reveal your 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.”

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 regarding your heart and your words. Proverbs 4:23, Proverbs 23:7, and Matthew 15:18-19 teaches that everything you are stems from the heart. Now, this principle is specifically applied to your words. If you are always speaking words that are holy and pleasing to God, it is because your heart is holy and pleasing to God (at least with regard to the words you speak). If, however, you find yourself engaged in filthy speech, gossip, lying, and other sins of the tongue, it is because your heart is *not* holy and pleasing to God. So, as is true in every area of your life, if you want to be pleasing and holy in the sight of God, your heart must first be holy and pleasing to God!

Consider, then, the importance of exercising care regarding the kind of speech you hear! Recognize that your sense of hearing is one of the ways in which things gain access into your mind. It is one of the “entrance gates” to your heart. So, you need to be careful what kind of language you *willingly* subject yourself to from entertainment sources (i.e. television, radio, music, etc.). You need to choose your friends wisely (1 Corinthians 15:33) – and not *willingly* spend time around those who are using sinful language (unless you are actively trying to change them). You also need to *do your best* to remove yourself 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 your life (because you can choose *not* to be involved in the sinful things around you), it is generally true! The more that you are *willing* to put yourself around sin, the more you will tend to become desensitized to sin – often resulting in imitating the same kinds of sinful speech/behavior.

(3) The Bible teaches that your 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 your physical body, it has the potential to cause much destruction if it is 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, James 3 demonstrates the difficulty involved in controlling your tongue. I believe the phrase "no man can tame the tongue" (James 3:8) means that you cannot tame it to the point that you 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! You must exercise constant watch care over it! You must be diligent to exercise the proper self-discipline over the tongue – because you must not be hypocritical and allow your tongue to speak words of praise to God and then use it against your fellow man!

So, you must be diligent and recognize the destructive power possessed by the words that you use – as well as the power for good that is possessed by your 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.”

My Words Must Be Transformed

The transformation that is required of Christians involves the renewing of the mind. For instance, Ephesians 4:22-24 instructs, “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

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 goes on to demonstrate that there are some sins of the tongue that must be put away (i.e. lying and corrupt words) and replaced with things that are right in God’s sight (i.e. words of truth and edification). 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 (i.e. filthiness, foolish talking, coarse jesting).

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.

Conclusion

God certainly does care about the words that you use! You will be judged by the standard of God’s word one Day. Your words reveal your heart. Your words are powerful. And, your words must be transformed – if you desire to please God.

Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

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