

Valley Bible Church Growth Studies

Spiritual Growth and Christian Character

Lesson 6 – Character – Speech

Introduction

Today we are going to start talking about some areas of Character. We could define character as moral strength, self-discipline, or moral fortitude.

Reputation is what folks think you are. Personality is what you seem to be. Character is what you really are. Alfred Armand Montapert

Reputation is what men and women think of us. Character is what God and the angels know of us. Thomas Paine (1737–1809)

Character in a saint means the disposition of Jesus Christ persistently manifested. Oswald Chambers (1874–1917)

Let's look at 1 Tim. 4:7b-8,12,15-16

^{7b}*On the other hand, **discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness**; ⁸for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

¹²*Let no one look down on your youthfulness, **but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.***

¹⁵***Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.***

¹⁶*Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; **persevere** in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. 1 Tim. 4:7b-8,12,15-16 (NASB)*

Over the next five weeks we will look at these five areas of our character. Today we will study about speech.

Why is our speech so important? Jesus said that ... *For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.* Jesus in Matt 12:34-37 (NASB)

A person's speech reflects what is in their heart. Also, the self-control that is needed to control the tongue is that of a mature believer. As we grow we should see a change in our speech.

¹*Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. ²For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. ³Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. ⁴Look at the ships also, though they are*

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so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. 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! ⁶And 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. ⁷For 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.*** ⁹With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. ¹¹***Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?*** ¹²***Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.*** James 3:1-12 (NASB)

Let's look at some speech to avoid.

Speech to Avoid

Flattery – To praise too much or insincerely, as to win favor.

¹⁶*These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.* Jude 1:16 (NASB)

²⁸*A lying tongue hates those it crushes,*

And a flattering mouth works ruin. Prov. 26:28 (NASB)

²*They speak falsehood to one another;*

With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

³*May the LORD cut off all flattering lips,*

The tongue that speaks great things; Psa. 12:2-3 (NASB)

Lies – Self-explanatory.

²²*Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD,*

But those who deal faithfully are His delight. Prov. 12:22 (NASB)

Slander (lies damaging to a person's character or reputation) and Gossip (repeating idle talk and rumors especially about other's private affairs)

²⁸*And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are **gossips**, ³⁰**slanderers**, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.* Rom. 1:28-32 (NASB)

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Hurtful talk

¹⁸*There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword,*

But the tongue of the wise brings healing. Prov. 12:18 (NASB)

⁸*But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and **abusive speech** from your mouth. Col. 3:8 (NASB)*

Quarreling

¹⁹*He who loves a quarrel loves sin;*

he who builds a high gate invites destruction. Prov. 17:19 (NIV)

Complaining

¹⁴*Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. Phil. 2:14-16 (NASB)*

Speech to strive for

Wholesome, Edifying Words

²³*A man has joy in an apt answer,*

And how delightful is a timely word! Prov. 15:23 (NASB)

²⁴*Pleasant words are a honeycomb,*

Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Prov. 16:24 (NASB)

¹¹*Like apples of gold in settings of silver*

Is a word spoken in right circumstances. Prov. 25:11 (NASB)

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. Eph. 4:29 (NASB)*

Off-color jokes, profanity, dirty stories, vulgarity, double entendre, and every other form of corrupt talk should never cross our lips. ... Our speech should build up by being helpful, constructive, encouraging, instructive, and uplifting. MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Ephesians

Homework:

Read Mark 1-7

Think of a typical day and the kind of speech you have at work, home, school, with friend, with family, etc. Is it honoring to the Lord or not?