

Your Speech Betrays You

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Introduction

During the days of Jephthah, internecine war raged between the tribes of Ephraim and Gilead. After Ephraim was defeated, the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan. Fugitives of Ephraim, attempting to cross over were forced to say, "Shibboleth." However, the Ephraimite's inability to correctly pronounce this word led to their identification and slaughter (Judges 12:1-7).

Judges 12:1-7 ... 1 Then the men of Ephraim were summoned, and they crossed to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the sons of Ammon without calling us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you." 2 Jephthah said to them, "I and my people were at great strife with the sons of Ammon; when I called you, you did not deliver me from their hand. 3 "When I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the sons of Ammon, and the Lord gave them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" 4 Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought Ephraim; and the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You are fugitives of Ephraim, O Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim and in the midst of Manasseh." 5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan opposite Ephraim. And it happened when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," 6 then they would say to him, "Say now, 'Shibboleth.'" But he said, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce it correctly. Then they seized him and slew him at the fords of the Jordan. Thus there fell at that time 42,000 of Ephraim. 7 Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. (NASB95)

After returning from Babylonian captivity, the Jews began marrying the women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. The resulting loss of cultural, ethnic and religious heritage was reflected by their children who spoke a mongrel tongue: "half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people" (Nehemiah 13:23-31).

Nehemiah 13:23-31 ... 23 In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. 24 As for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod, and none of them was able to speak the language of Judah, but the language of his own people. 25 So I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. 26 "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations

there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin. 27 “Do we then hear about you that you have committed all this great evil by acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women?” 28 Even one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite, so I drove him away from me. 29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. 30 Thus I purified them from everything foreign and appointed duties for the priests and the Levites, each in his task, 31 and I arranged for the supply of wood at appointed times and for the first fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good. (NASB95)

After Jesus was taken captive, Peter found himself alone in the courtyard of Caiaphas, surrounded by adversaries and challenged by accusers, who said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” Despite his repeated denials, the bystanders said to Peter, “Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you” (Matthew 26:69-75). From the parallel accounts, this referred to his distinctive Galilian accent (Mark 14:70-71; Luke 22:59-60). In response, Peter began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!” His speech again betrayed him.

Matthew 26:69-75 ... 69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” 71 When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” 72 And again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” 73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.” 74 Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. (NASB95)

Mark 14:70-71 ... 70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, “Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.” 71 Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” (NKJV)

Luke 22:59-60 ... 59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” 60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. (NKJV)

In like manner, our speech sometimes betrays us. Jesus himself said, “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” (Matthew 12:33-37).

Matthew 12:33-37 ... 33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 “The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man

brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (NASB95)

Rebuking the tradition-bound scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said, “It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man... For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man” (Matthew 15:10-20; cf. Mark 7:14-23).

Matthew 15:10-20 ... 10 After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, “Hear and understand. 11 “It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.” 12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?” 13 But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. 14 “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” 15 Peter said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.” 16 Jesus said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 “Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 “These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.” (NASB95)

Mark 7:14-23 ... 14 After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. 16 [“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”] 17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. 18 And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) 20 And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. 21 “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.” (NASB95)

Denominational Jargon

Does your conversation reflect denominational jargon? Do you say, “My pastor,” when referring to a local evangelist who only serves in the capacity of a preacher? Do you say, “My church,” when referring to that precious body of believers for which Christ died? Do you say, “Accept Jesus as your personal Savior!” without offering a corresponding explanation of the terms of pardon set forth in His Word?

In years past, in another location, one of the men of the congregation offered a Wednesday evening invitation in which he ridiculed “Five Steppers,” i.e., those of us who emphasize the necessity of hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized. Yet, spiritual reality is this: men must hear the word of God (Romans 10:17). We must believe the gospel of Christ (John 8:24). All are commanded to repent (Acts 17:30-31). We must confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10). Penitent believers must be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Furthermore, Christians must also remain faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

Romans 10:17 ... 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (NKJV)

John 8:24 ... 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (NKJV)

Acts 17:30-31 ... 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (NKJV)

Romans 10:9-10 ... 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (NKJV)

Acts 2:38 ... 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)

Revelation 2:10 ... 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (NKJV)

Many devour the ecumenical writings of Max Lucado, Rick Warren, Joel Osteen, etc. Such authors would not be so popular if they, like the apostle Paul, preached the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:17-32). Instead, they are ear-tickling men-pleasers, who turn away from divinely inspired truth unto humanly devised myths (2 Timothy 4:1-8).

Acts 20:17-32 ... 17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 “And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 “But I do not consider my life of any

account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. 25 “And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 “Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (NASB95)

2 Timothy 4:1-8 ... 1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NASB95)

God rebuked apostates of old by saying, “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:9-13). Those who turn aside to denominational dogma incur the same guilt. Hosea’s warning, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,” has modern relevance and application (Hosea 4:1-6).

Jeremiah 2:9-13 ... 9 “Therefore I will yet contend with you,” declares the Lord, “And with your sons’ sons I will contend. 10 “For cross to the coastlands of Kittim and see, And send to Kedar and observe closely And see if there has been such a thing as this! 11 “Has a nation changed gods When they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory For that which does not profit. 12 “Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,” declares the Lord. 13 “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water. (NASB95)

Hosea 4:1-6 ... 1 Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land. 2 There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. 3 Therefore the

land mourns, And everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky, And also the fish of the sea disappear. 4 Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof; For your people are like those who contend with the priest. 5 So you will stumble by day, And the prophet also will stumble with you by night; And I will destroy your mother. 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. (NASB95)

Cursing and Profanity

Is your speech marked by cursing and profanity? Man's fallen state is betrayed by the tongue: "Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:9-18). Concerning the wicked, the Psalmist declared "There is nothing reliable in what they say; their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue" (Psalm 5:8-10). Again, "His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is mischief and wickedness" (Psalm 10:3-11).

Romans 3:9-18 ... 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 And the path of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (NASB95)

*Psalm 5:8-10 ... 8 O Lord, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me. 9 **There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.** 10 Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You. (NASB95)*

*Psalm 10:3-11 ... 3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, And the greedy man curses and spurns the Lord. 4 The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." 5 His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight; As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them. 6 He says to himself, "I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity." 7 **His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.** 8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the hiding places he kills the innocent; His eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate. 9 He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the afflicted; He catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net. 10 He crouches, he bows down, And the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones. 11 He says to himself, "God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it." (NASB95)*

Cursing is disrespectful. It takes things that are celestial (i.e., God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, heaven, and all that is high and holy) and drags them down to a terrestrial (i.e., earthly) plane. It takes things that are private (i.e., routine bodily functions) and drags them into public view. It takes things that are special (i.e., a loving sexual relationship shared between husband and wife), and treats them as common and base. It takes things that are serious (i.e., hell, eternal punishment, damnation, etc.) and treats them as trivial.

Let us avoid, not only explicit language, but also euphemisms. “Gosh” and “golly” are substitutes for “God.” “Egad,” used as an interjection is probably a euphemism for “Oh God!” “Gee” and “jeepers” are contractions of “Jesus.” “Cripes” and “crikey” are euphemisms of “Christ.” “Lordy” is just another way of taking the Lord’s name in vain “Doggoned” is a euphemism for “God damn.” “Dang” and “Darn” are watered-down versions of “damn.” “Tarnation” is an alteration of damnation, which is euphemism for “damnation.” “Heck” is an exclamation used in place of “hell.”

Heed the warning of Jesus, who said, “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37). Consider the counsel of Paul who said, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse...” (Romans 12:14-21). Remember James’ teaching on the tongue (James 3:6-12).

Matthew 12:36-37 ... 36 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (NASB95)

Romans 12:14-21 ... 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NASB95)

James 3:6-12 ... 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. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from 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. (NASB95)

Selfishness

Is selfishness seen in your speech? Do you monologue conversations? Do you talk interminably about your own problems, but turn a deaf ear to the trials of others?

Consider the rich fool, who could only think of himself, who spoke of “my crops,” “my barns,” “my grain,” “my goods,” and my soul” (Luke 12:15-21). Why was his soul summarily required? He was unfaithful, bowing before mammon rather than God (Matthew 6:24); he was unthankful, never acknowledging the Source of his bounty (1 Timothy 4:4-5); he was unhelpful, hoarding his wealth, and never offering assistance to others (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

*Luke 12:15-21 ... 15 Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” 16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 “And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store **my crops**?’ 18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down **my barns** and build larger ones, and there I will store all **my grain** and **my goods**. 19 ‘And I will say to **my soul**, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’ 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” (NASB95)*

Matthew 6:24 ... 24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 4:4-5 ... 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. (NASB95)

1 Timothy 6:17-19 ... 17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (NASB95)

Even after he died and was in torment, the rich man selfishly thought of Lazarus as a subordinate servant: “Father Abraham, send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.” Again, “I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house — for I have five brothers — in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment” (Luke 16:19-31).

Luke 16:19-31 ... 19 “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 “And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were

falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' 25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' 27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.' " (NASB95)

In contrast, let us cultivate the spirit of Jesus, who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:33-35). Manifesting the mind of Christ, may we selflessly serve others (Philippians 2:1-8), meeting the needs of our brethren (Matthew 25:34-40; Romans 12:10-13), ministering to those who are less fortunate (Luke 14:12-14; Hebrews 13:16).

Acts 20:33-35 ... 33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. 34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " (NASB95)

Philippians 2:1-8 ... 1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (NASB95)

Matthew 25:34-40 ... 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You,

or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 ‘When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’ (NASB95)

Romans 12:10-13 ... 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. (NASB95)

Luke 14:12-14 ... 12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. 13 “But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:16 ... 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (NASB95)

Conclusion

Are you guarding your mouth and bridling your tongue (Proverbs 21:23; James 3:1-5)? Is your speech marked by the gospel’s gracious influence (Colossians 4:5-6)? Do your words minister grace to the hearers, and is your life a source of blessing (Ephesians 4:29-32)? May our prayer be like that of the Psalmist: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

Proverbs 21:23 ... 23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles. (NASB95)

James 3:1-5 ... 1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 2 For 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. 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses’ mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. 4 Look at the ships also, though they are 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! (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 13:5 ... 5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? (NASB95)

Galatians 6:4-5 ... 4 But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. 5 For each one will bear his own load. (NASB95)

Colossians 4:5-6 ... 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (NASB95)

Ephesians 4:29-32 ... 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. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (NASB95)

Psalm 19:14 ... 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer. (NASB95)