

Learning to Speak Well of Others



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) August 5, 2020

“Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness” (Isaiah 58:9).

The reason we pray, fast and study God’s Word is to be heard in heaven. But the Lord attaches a big “if” to this. He declares, “If you want me to hear you on high, then you have to look at the issues of your heart. Yes, I will hear you — if you quit pointing a finger at others, if you stop speaking about them disrespectfully.”

It’s a great sin in God’s eyes for us to speak in ways that tarnish someone else’s reputation. Proverbs tells us, “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold” (22:1). A good reputation is a treasure that is carefully built up over time. Yet we can quickly destroy it with a single defaming word from our mouth.

David made a conscious determination to watch his tongue: “I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress” (Psalm 17:3). “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3).

Again, David exhorts, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

You may wonder, “Is it really possible to control the tongue, to purpose not to sin with the mouth?” Again, David answers with this testimony: “I said, ‘I will take heed my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me’” (Psalm 39:1, KJV). He is saying, in essence, “Every time I mount a horse, I have to put a bridle in its mouth. And as surely as I do that with my horse, I have to do it with my tongue.”

Beloved, not one person reading this message is too holy to heed it and make a change. We have all misjudged people, whether knowingly or unknowingly, and spoken in ways we should not have. But there’s good news! If you repent before the Lord, in his love and graciousness he will give you a renewed heart and strength to put away all evil speaking.

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