



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 18:10:2009

Website: www.victoriouschristianministry.org

STUDY 29: DANGER OF A LITTLE TONGUE

James 3:1-18

Little things often have potentials for great danger. Little foxes spoil vines (Songs of Solomon 2:15). Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour (Ecclesiastes 10:1). Little worms destroy giant trees. Tiny bacteria can prove fatal when inside human or animal body. The steering wheel of a trailer and the rudder of a ship are both very small compared to the entire body of the vessels yet they control their course. And "the tongue is a little member". Its use or misuse can determine our destiny (Proverbs 18:21; James 1:26). The Bible encourages Christians to expose unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11-13; Titus 1:13; James 5:19,20) but at the same time warns against tale-bearing, backbiting and busy-bodding in other men's matter (Leviticus 19:16; I Peter 4:15). Clear distinction can be drawn between godless chatter on one hand and godly correction on the other.

CAUSES OF THE DANGER

James 3:5-8; Proverbs 26:18,19; 11:13; 20:19; 16:27.

James described the tongue as a little fire that devastates the course of nature, and is full of deadly poison. Misuse of the tongue often begin with little things like backbiting, slander, false witness, tale-bearing and busy-bodding in other people's matter. Many, sometimes imperceptibly, get into these through jesting (Ephesians 5:4) drawing conclusions on half facts (John 7:51-53; Proverbs 18:13,17), basing interpretation on appearances (John 7:24), attempting to justify self so as to impress others to win their affection and acceptance (James 3:5; Galatians 1:10). Such people exaggerate facts, twist stories and multiply words (Proverbs 26:25) to make their points. We must not forget that "In the multitude of words there wanted not sin" (Pr 10:19, 23).

CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

James 3:1-4; Proverbs 12:19; 17:20; 18:21; 19:5; 26:18,19,21,22,28; Psalms 12:3; Ezekiel 33:30-32; Numbers 12:1-10; 16:1-15, 19-32; 2 Kings 2:23,24; 7:1-2, 17-20.

Accidents are inevitable when the steering wheel of a moving vehicle is not under proper control. Similarly, a tongue that is out of control can cause terrible damages. A misused tongue is like a sharp razor. It inflicts wounds, causes bitterness, confusion, loss of confidence, strives, hatred and such like evils. In a Christian assembly this destroys love, unity, fellowship as well as restricts the free flow of the Spirit of God (Proverbs 15:4); leading eventually to suspicion, spiritual weakness discouragement and confusion. Perpetrators of such evils in the body of Christ cannot escape the punishment of Him "which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (Revelation 2:12).

Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern

COUNSEL AGAINST ABUSE

James 3:9-12; Leviticus 19:16; Matthew 12:36; Psalms 15:3; 34:13; Proverbs 20:19; 26:20

"Where there is no wood the fire goeth out" is not only a wise saying but a sound principle for terminating tale-bearing. It takes more than one person to fight, backbite or gossip. And it is through consecration and discipline that one can refuse to be the wood through which the fire of tale-bearing must burn. Nehemiah refused to abandon God's work to listen to rumours (Nehemiah 6:4-9). He choosed rather to suffer misrepresentation and slander in silence for the sake of the progress of the work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem than to run around to justify himself as he was not guilty of the accusations. (I Peter 4:14-19; I Thessalonians 4:11; I Timothy 5:13). Please note that in this occasion Nehemiah was totally innocent and these accusers were malicious, therefore Nehemiah was not disobeying scriptural injunctions to set records right and / or apologise for wrongs committed under a false pretense of being busy on God's work (Matthew 5:24; Acts 24:16; I Peter 3:15). To have done so would amounted to playing the ostrich game.

There is power of life and death in the tongue. Your tongue will take you to heaven or take heaven away from you. It will take holiness, integrity and determination to pray like the psalmist "Set a watch, O Lord before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalms 141:3).