

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.40, October 1, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O.

Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."*

COMMUNICATION!

Read the passages from Proverbs; then write the Biblical principle of communication in your own words in the blanks. {Don't be lazy— do it!!}

1. *** Proverbs 11:9 / Proverbs 12:18 / Proverbs 15:4 / Proverbs 18:8 / Proverbs 18:21: Our words (what we say) have tremendous _____.
2. *** Proverbs 4:20-23 / Proverbs 6:12 / Proverbs 6:14 / Proverbs 6:18 / Proverbs 15:28 / Proverbs 16:23: Words come from our _____, so in order to deal with communication we must also deal with our _____ [same word] before God.
3. *** Proverbs 10:19 / Proverbs 11:12 / Proverbs 13:3 / Proverbs 17:27-28 / Proverbs 18:2 / Proverbs 21:23: Don't talk _____. Keep your words _____.
4. *** Proverbs 21:9: Avoid _____.
5. *** Proverbs 15:1 / Proverbs 25:15: Use a _____ voice.
6. *** Proverbs 12:18 / Proverbs 14:29 / Proverbs 15:28 / Proverbs 16:32 / Proverbs 21:23 / Proverbs 26:4 / Proverbs 29:20: _____ before you speak.
7. *** Proverbs 12:16 / Proverbs 19:11: A key to good communication is to ignore, don't react to, _____ and overlook _____.

8. *** Proverbs 15:31 / Proverbs 18:13 / Proverbs 18:15 / Proverbs 19:20: Be a very good _____ . Seek to understand, before being understood.
9. *** Proverbs 12:17 / Proverbs 12:22 / Proverbs 19:5 / Proverbs 26:18-19 / Proverbs 28:23 / Proverbs 29:5: Speak the _____ , not what makes you look good or what you think the other person wants to hear.
10. *** Proverbs 15:23 / Proverbs 25:11: Think about the _____ that comes from speaking good 'in season' words.
11. *** Proverbs 17:14 / Proverbs 20:3 / Proverbs 26:21: Don't be the one to start or continue _____. [Above outline, copied; edited....original source unknown]

SINS OF THE TONGUE! (Edited, unknown source)

James 1:26 teaches us that, **If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.** In other words, if you can't control your tongue, what you profess to have in Christ is useless.

1. **A too active tongue:** Proverbs 10:19: **When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.**
2. **A Careless tongue:** Matthew 12:36-37 says, *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*
3. **A Lying tongue:** Rev. 21:8 says that **all liars will have their part in the lake of fire.** Jesus said **Satan is a liar and the father of lying** (John 8:44). When you or I lie we are saying allegiance to the devil. Jesus is the Way, **the Truth**, and the Life. Fill your life with Christ, and you will fill your life with the truth.
4. **A tongue overflowing with flattery.** Psalm 12:3 says, **May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue.** Now think about that for a minute: What if God surgically removed all flattering lips and boastful tongues? Would you still be able to talk? Proverbs 29:5 says, **Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet.**

Flattery is excessive praise: If a salesman comes to your door and says, "We've surveyed the neighborhood and found that you are the leader of leaders. You're brilliant. You're articulate. You are a take-charge personality. **I want you to have these free books...** they are only \$99.99 per month for the rest of your life." That's flattery. **Honor is praise for what you have justly done.** The Bible says to give honor to whom honor is due.

But flattery is excessive praise, and some people use flattery to control other people. They excessively praise you; and their end motive is to control you.

5. A tongue spewing out hate, slander, and bitterness, etc: I John 3:15 teaches us that **whoever hates his brother is a murderer**. You don't have to take a gun and shoot somebody to be a murder in the eyes of God. Also, words spoken in anger, bitterness and retaliation cannot be taken back: A peasant slandered a friend and later went to a pastor and confessed his deed. He said to the pastor, **"I want to make things right with my neighbor and with God."** The pastor told him to fill a big sack with goose feathers and drop them on the door step of every person's home whom he had slandered. So he did it. Then he came back to the pastor and said, "Now what must I do?" The pastor said, **"Take your sack and now go and collect all those feathers."** **When the peasant tried to collect the feathers, he could not find a one.** He went back to the pastor and told him the wind had blown the feathers away. The pastor said, "And so it is with your words. They are easily dropped, but you can never collect them again." Like those feathers, you cannot recover the careless words you speak. [Yes, confess and repent and be forgiven of the various sins of the tongue; but know that there can be long term damage from a slanderous tongue.]

It was a foolish one who said, *'Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.'* Words can hurt you. Words cannot only hurt you, words can kill you. Proverbs 18:21 says, **Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat the fruit thereof.** Notice the extremities here: life and death, nothing in between. Nothing neutral comes out of your mouth. **The Bible tells us that our tongues need a bit or bridle!** (James 3:2-10) A bridle is an instrument of force that makes the horse obey. If you want him to go right you pull on this side. If you want him to go left, you pull on the other side. If you want him to stop, you pull straight back and he will stop.

REALITY: Human tongue problems are deeply rooted in a HEART PROBLEM: Matthew 12:34; 15:18-20!!

6. The Good News that helps us deal with our wayward tongue is the wisdom from God. That wisdom from God is Jesus Christ and as we trust and believe in Him, as we take and eat and fill ourselves of the Bread that came down from heaven then we will have the power and ability to overcome the sins of the tongue. Because Christ who overcame death and the devil now lives and reigns within us by His Holy Spirit.

FOUR tests to help guide our conversations: First, *is it absolutely true?* Second, *is what you're saying absolutely necessary?* Third, *is it kind, and will it bring glory to God?* Fourth, *will others be blessed by your saying it; and*

WILL JESUS APPROVE OF IT?

WHO CAN CONTROL THE TONGUE?

Proverbs 21:23 says **He who guards his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles. Even so, by ourselves we cannot control our tongues. But Christ can and He lives within every Christian to empower us every moment. In this life we will NOT be without sin; however, through Christ we can overcome a wicked tongue!**

WINNING OVER CONFLICT!

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: If you don't need this now, PRAISE THE LORD! But Cheer up— sooner or later you will! The details differ but the core situations are agonizingly similar in homes, churches, the work place, and/or families:

1. Wrong words are spoken and/or wrong deeds are done.
2. There is denial, self-justification, and/or defensiveness.
3. There's lots of anger and finger pointing and hurt. **Now what?**

You can- if you so choose- keep blasting each other. With every blast, you will give the other side more ammunition. Indeed, you can keep 'shooting at' each other, pointing out the other's faults (real or imagined) until hell freezes over— you will never run out of ammunition.

You can FEEL JUSTIFIED every step of the way and build an army to agree with you! You can write each other off and refuse to seek reconciliation and leave a marriage and/or a church and/or a friendship, but just remember: Such paths are not sanctioned by JESUS, nor by the Holy Spirit, nor by His Holy Word, and JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING!

HOWEVER, I HAVE SUPER GOOD NEWS: When wrong deeds are done and/or wrong words are said— **there are Biblical solutions!** Yield to the promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit and, thus, CHOOSE TO.

1. Make NO excuse for your own wrongs.
2. BE GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL toward those who have wronged you.
3. Confess your own sin, only— it was wrong, it was against God and against others: "When I did or said 'so-and-so' I was wrong, please forgive me!"
4. Henceforth, I will NOT focus on the sins of others, only my own; and I will make sure that I rest in God's forgiveness for my sin, forgive others even as God for Christ sake has forgiven me (Eph 4:29-32); and humbly ask for the forgiveness of any who I have wronged in word or deed.

5. **Moreover, a sinful word or deed done to me NEVER justifies a sinful response from me!** (Rom. 12:14-21; Eph. 4:29-32; Phil. 2:1-16)

6. **Note:** When a person who has wronged me comes repenting, I must and I will forgive as often as they so come! Jesus says so! (Luke 17:1-5) That's horizontal forgiveness which is conditioned upon their repenting!

7. **However, regardless if they ever repent or not, I will choose to VERTICALLY forgive, bless, and do good!** (Eph. 4:29-32; Rom. 12:14-21; Matt. 5:43-48) **WARNING:** If I refuse to forgive, I may well be **GIVEN OVER TO TORMENTORS:** Matt. 18:21-35. In so much as matters depend on me, I will reaffirm fellowship in Christ and go forward.

IS IT TOO LATE?— I HAVE ALREADY SINNED WITH MY MOUTH!

Indeed, what if I have already responded to the sinful words or deeds of others with my own sinful responses? NOW WHAT? Simply, I must turn from any pity party or anger or wrath or evil speaking or getting even or of trying to make them pay and, instead, function as the God-called minister of **RECONCILIATION** that I am! (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

I must submit to the YOKE OF JESUS and confess my sin and not yours. I must repent of my anger, wrath and evil speaking. I must ask for the forgiveness of those toward whom I have demonstrated my fleshly attitudes (Gal. 5:19-21) And I must, then forgive offences done against me, proceeding with words and actions that encourage reconciliation. (Rom. 12:14-21; Eph. 4:29-32; Matt. 5:43-48; Gal. 5:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17-21)

JESUS SAYS, 'My yoke is EASY and my burden is light!'

SOMEONE SAYS: "I do not agree. This path is NOT EASY! My flesh hates it!" **MY OWN RESPONSE:** "Yes, I understand; AND MY FLESH AGREES WITH YOUR FLESH! BUT MY FLESH AND YOUR FLESH ARE LIARS!"

Jesus says that HIS YOKE IS EASY!

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) The path of the **EASY YOKE** of Jesus!

IN STARK CONTRAST, the Bible also says that the way of the TRANSGRESSOR is hard! (Prov. 13:15) HARDNESS is what is presently being experienced as we heed our own understanding; and it won't get better until **YOU and I YOKE UP WITH JESUS!**

WHEN THE EASY YOKE OF JESUS IS NOT TAKEN— We deny... even lie... cuddling up to the author of all lies, satan. We get mad. We start and/or continue shooting DEFENSIVE, NON EDIFYING WORDS at each other and **blasting one another to our friends as we develop an evil army to defend us and destroy our offender!** We break off relationships, friendships, marriages, Church membership, etc.

Moreover, we rebel and go our own independent way; and may even turn to the WORLD to defend our case, just like the carnal Corinthians who took each other to the court of man, while rejecting the judgment/justice and mercy that God ordains through the church. IN PRIDE, we do ANYTHING OTHER THAN humbly coming to the cross. AND IN PRIDE, we become TOTALLY BLINDED to the fact that it is ONLY by pride that contention flourishes; and by pride we are blinded to the reality that we are grieving the Holy Spirit, breaking the heart of Jesus, and pointing people, especially our children toward hell and not heaven. **SUCH ARE THE HARD WAYS WE TAKE WHEN WE TRAVEL THE HARD ROAD OF TRANSGRESSORS!**

Nevertheless, for those who have 'ears to hear' what the Holy Spirit says— **IT IS TIME TO BE SUBMIT TO THE EASY YOKE OF JESUS!** In spite of all of the evil that has been said or done which pleases satan and slanders Jesus— Nevertheless, today is a day of mercy and grace! God is calling each of us to a wonderful opportunity to DEFEAT our flesh and the lying devil. **The road to freedom starts as we SUBMIT TO GOD. (This defeats our flesh) Now, restored in fellowship with God in Christ, we can RESIST THE DEVIL and he MUST flee! (James 4:7)** Thus, we have a wonderful opportunity to not only defeat our flesh and the devil, but a wonderful opportunity to experience GRACE greater than our sin, to bring glory and honor to Jesus; and to give a powerful witness to the world around us!

IT'S TIME: Get off the HARD ROAD and YIELD to receive the easy yoke of Jesus: 1. Get alone with Jesus and His Word and ask the HOLY SPIRIT to guide you according to the pure Word of God and not according to your emotions. 2. Get pen and paper.... Now: 3. "LORD JESUS, GUIDE MY PEN TO WRITE DOWN ANY AND ALL THAT I and I ALONE HAVE DONE OR SAID THAT DID NOT PLEASE YOU!" 4. Make NO excuse. 5. MAKE GODLY CONFESSIONS like these, "LORD, I confess MY own sin of gossip." "My sin, it was wrong; it was against you, O God. LORD JESUS, I will go and ask the forgiveness of the person or persons I wronged." 6. "LORD, IF SOMEONE COMES ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS— I WILL grant forgiveness to the person asking for forgiveness."

7. "LORD JESUS, even if others never ask for forgiveness for what I believe to be their sin — I WILL STILL DEAL WITH MINE! AND in my heart I will forgive them; and I will love them, pray for them, and do good to them... JUST AS YOUR WORD COMMANDS!" (Rom 12:14-21)

8. "LORD JESUS, I responded to wrong deeds and wrong words with my own **WRONG** words and deeds. Please forgive me. I **NOW EMBRACE YOUR** easy yoke of confessing my sin and not the sins of others; of confessing my sin of anger instead of blaming others for it. **I now confess, "Your YOKE IS EASY and YOUR BURDEN IS LIGHT!"**

BEWARE: Here are some of the ways of the HARD ROAD:

1. Live for yourself. 2. Pleasure, fame, fortune— all for self. 3. Glory and Honor for self.
4. Justify self. 5. Defend self. 6. Blame others. Fill the air waves with Smokescreens.
7. Revenge, Bitterness, Envy, Hate. 8. Refuse to Forgive and to Sacrificially Love.
9. Trust in self and in those who will encourage self. 10. Rebel Against God-given Authority.
11. Be a victim.

JESUS is the CHIEF MODEL of the way in which He leads His sheep: NO ONE has ever suffered such injustice as Jesus! And yet, Gaze Upon Him and See—

1. There was no resentment. 2. There were no plans for revenge. 3. He had no bitterness. He held no grudges. 4. There was no self pity. 5. He never demanded His rights. 6. There was no anger, no depression.

INSTEAD: 1. There was Silent Suffering for the sake of others. 2. There was Meekness, Gentleness, Humility, and Acceptance. 3. There was Love and Forgiveness and Prayer for those who had betrayed and tormented Him. 4. Moreover, there was abiding trust in His Father! 5. And there was Sweet Submission to the will of His Father! 6. He lived to GIVE....not to get!

O WHAT AMAZING FOOTPRINTS HE LEFT FOR US TO FOLLOW AFTER! (And don't forget, no one ever lived a happier more joyful life on earth than Jesus!)

Please also under score this: The silence and suffering of Jesus does not cancel out the Biblical mandate of PUNISHMENT FOR SIN. Indeed, on the cross, Jesus paid the stiff penalty for our sin; and from the New Testament GOSPEL MESSAGE we are assured that VENGEANCE IS MINE, says the LORD, He will repay!

The way of the cross, (**The EASY YOKE of Jesus!**) releases and relieves us from the PAYBACK BUSINESS! Jesus walked the EASY ROAD of being YOKED to His Father! Jesus says to us today!

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30)

MERCY and ABOUNDING GRACE TO ALL IN CHRIST! James Bell