

Three Critical Harmful Habits Of The Tongue

James 3:2

Introduction:

- A. James warns us of the dangers of the tongue.
 - 1. Slow to speak (1:19)
 - 2. Unbridled tongue makes religion vain. (1:26).
 - 3. Speak as those who will be judged. (2:12)
 - 4. Power of tongue is reason to be cautious about teaching. (3:1-12)
- B. Welfare of church often depends on proper use of tongue.
- C. We notice three critical harmful habits of the tongue found among Christians.

Discussion:

I. The Habit Of Being *Noncritical*.

- A. The Corinthians were too noncritical of sin. (1 Cor. 5:1-13).
- B. The companions of Paul were too noncritical. (2 Tim. 4:16).
- C. The Lord's watchmen in Israel were too noncritical - "dumb dogs". (Isa. 56:10-11).
- D. Many "positive thinkers" in church today are too noncritical.
 - 1. Like proverbial monkeys -- hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil.
 - 2. Find no reason to "reprove and rebuke" (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
 - 3. Find no reason to "expose (reprove) unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11).
 - 4. Find reason at all to tell another of his fault. (Matt. 18:15-17).
 - 5. Often only critical of the critical.

II. The Habit Of Being *Hypocritical*.

- A. These, like Pharisees, "talk a good game". (Matt. 23:2-3).
- B. These are double-tongued. (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8).
 - 1. Speak out of both sides of mouth.
 - 2. Speak one thing to face, another to back.
- C. These use words as tool to exploit (sweet talk) people. (2 Pet. 2:3, 18-19).
 - 1. Sometimes to further ungodly designs.
 - 2. Sometimes to further selfish designs -- help to get one way in a matter.
 - 3. Sometimes to enlist personal whipping boys -- preachers often so used.

III. The Habit Of Being *Hypercritical*.

- A. Hypercritics are excessive fault-finders.
 - 1. Constantly look for ulterior motives in people.
 - 2. Constantly suspect sin without evidence of sin. (cf. Man in Iowa)
 - 3. Constantly barking rather than the dumb dogs of Isaiah.
- B. Hypercritics are often grossly inconsistent. (Matt. 11:16-19).
- C. Hypercritics are manifested in various ways.
 - 1. By being busybodies. (2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:15).
 - 2. By becoming nit-pickers - majoring in minors - neglect weightier matters (Matt. 23:23-25)
 - 3. By elevating personal scruples to church-wide issue. (Rom. 14)
- D. Hypercritics are a clear danger to themselves and the church.

1. Sin against brethren by condemning innocent. (Matt. 12:7; cf. Mt. 7:1).
2. Disrupt the peace and tear down rather than edify. (cf. Rom. 14:19)
3. Destroy friendships.
4. Destroy own closeness with brethren -- brethren have to avoid them in self-defense - wonder why brethren avoid them -- feel persecuted. (No glory in suffering as busy body)

Conclusion:

- A. Let us watch our tongues for own good and good of brethren.
- B. Let us find balance between total noncriticism and hypercriticism.