

Section 18: Misuse of the Tongue

In this lesson one of the pitfalls that may endanger the Christian's life will be uncovered. All of the scriptures relating to this matter will not be discussed, but for further reference one can look in a Topical Bible of Concordance under such subjects as "busybody", "talebearer", "speaking (evil of)", "tongue", etc. As a prerequisite to this study, one should scan the book of James, studying in detail the third chapter.

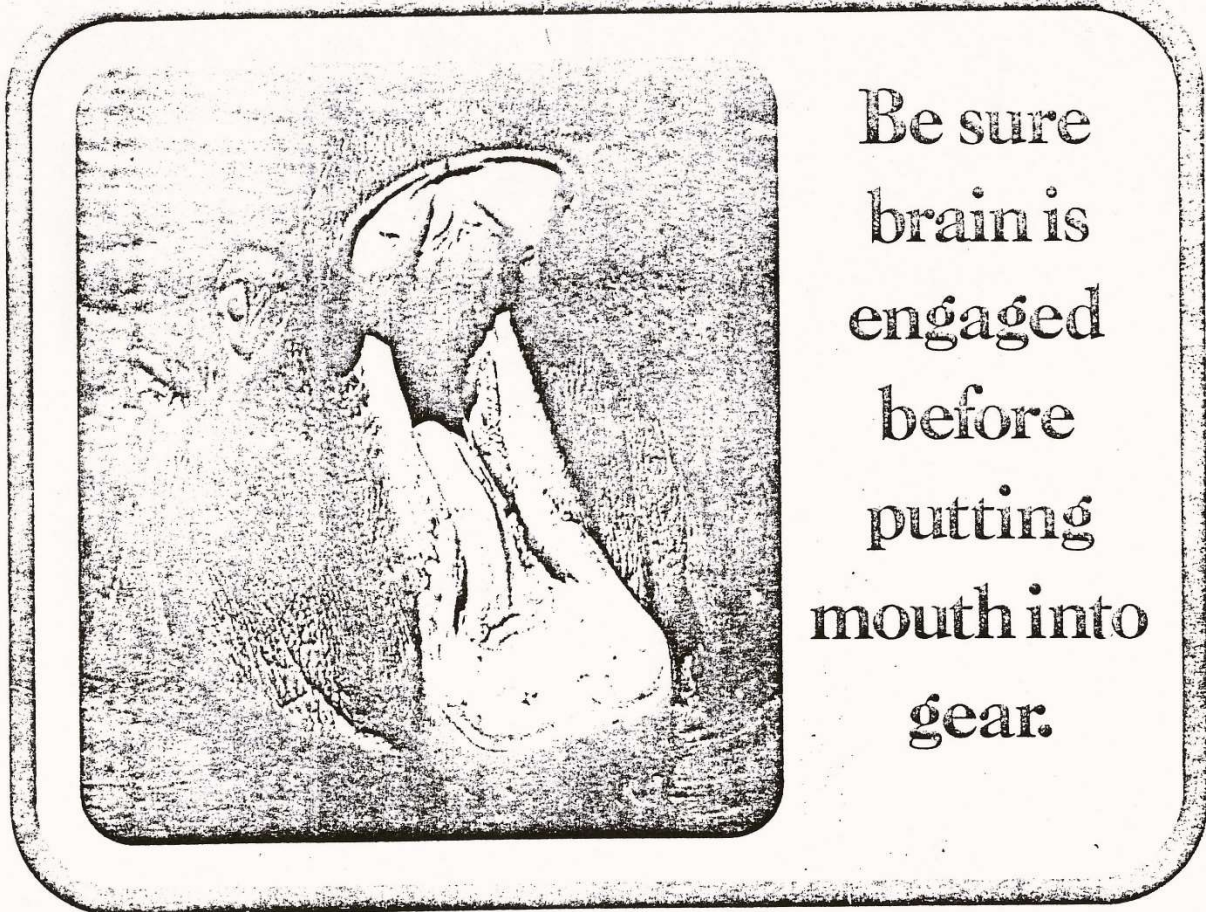
- I. Misuse of the Tongue
 - A. General References
 1. Leviticus 19:6 "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people..."¹⁶⁹
 2. Psalms 34:13 says, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile."¹⁷⁰
 3. Psalms 52:2 "Thy tongue ... like a sharp razor, working deceitfully."¹⁷¹
 4. Other related scriptures: Psalms 64:2-5, 120:2-5; Proverbs 10:12, 12:5-9, 13:3, 15:1, 17:4, 19:1; Isaiah 32:6-7; Matthew 12:34-37; Ephesians 5:4, 4:29.
 - B. God hates misuse of the tongue.
 1. Proverbs 6:16-19 speaks of a lying tongue, false witness, sower of discord among brethren.
 2. Proverbs 8:13 refers to a "froward mouth."
 - C. The misuse of the tongue is compared to evil.
 1. Ecclesiastes 10:11 A babbler is compared to the bite of a serpent (the side effect of a bite is swelling and puffiness).
 2. Romans 3:13 says the tongue is as the poison of an asp.
 3. According to Romans 1:29-30, I Peter 4:15, I Peter 2:1, misusers of the tongue are in the same category as murderers, thieves, haters of God, etc.

Many people recover from gunshot wounds, but how many are permanently injured because someone tried to murder their character with words!
- II. Traits of a Tongue Misuser.
 - A. As a dog, tongue misusers dig up old bones. They live in the past and can't forgive according to Philippians 3:2, Proverbs 16:27, and Galatians 5:15.
 1. Tongue misusers are as dogs who walk away from a bowl of good dog food (present blessings) and go to the corner of the dog pen to dig up bones that have been buried for years (people's past failures). They dream of how the bones used to taste (dwell on the past).
 2. The Bible says dogs (people who bite, devour, and dig up the past) will be outside the gate of the New Jerusalem (Revelations 22:15).

- B. Tongue misusers tell everything they know. They can't keep their mouths shut, according to Proverbs 11:13.
- III. Judgement of Tongue Misusers.
- A. They reap death, according to Proverbs 18:21.
 - B. They are judged by their words, according to Matthew 12:34-37.
Misusers shall reap what they sow and be judged by their words.
- IV. Harm of Gossip
- A. The travels of the children of Israel were delayed one week because Miriam spoke against Moses. How many churches forfeit revival and blessing because a busybody is allowed to "run at the mouth?" This delays the progress of the entire church, and as God judged Miriam, so the gossiping offender will be judged to allow the Church to move forward (Numbers 12).
 - B. Words are as wounds according to Proverbs 18:8.
- V. Prevention of, and the Christian's Response to Gossip
- A. Proverbs 26:20 says, "Where no wood is, the fire goeth out, so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."
 - 1. The gossipers' mouth should be stopped, according to Romans 3:13-19 and Titus 1:10-11.
 - 2. The Christian should withdraw himself from those who create strife with words (I Timothy 6:1-5). If a willing ear isn't lent, much gossip will be prevented. To give audience to a gossip makes one an accomplice to the crime (Romans 1:32).
 - B. The Christian should change the subject when he finds himself in the company of someone insistent on discussing others.
 - 1. If the gossip does not take the hint given, the Christian should make a direct statement such as, "I would rather not talk about it."
- VI. Conclusion
- A. Gossip will prevent one from entering into the presence of the Lord. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? ... in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." (Psalms 15:1-3)¹⁷²
 - B. The Irrevocable damage of gossip.
The story is told of a peasant who confessed to a priest that he had misrepresented the truth to his neighbors concerning another individual. For penance, the peasant was told to put feathers in the yard of everyone to whom he had spoken. Having completed his task, he returned to the priest, who then told him to go gather up all

of the feathers. This was an impossible task since the wind had blown the feathers in all directions. Gossip is easy to spread, but hard to recall.

- C. The Christian's prayer should be that of David, spoken in Psalms 141:3. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."¹⁷³



Be sure
brain is
engaged
before
putting
mouth into
gear.