

Sins of the Mouth: Boasting
12-03-17 AM

James talks a great deal about sins we can commit with our mouth. At the heart of his lesson is James 3:1-12, where he tells us that the mouth is the obstacle to perfection. Do you want to be perfect? Then learn to control your mouth. Jesus said that it is the instrument of the heart (Matthew 15:18), so we understand that any issue with the mouth is in the heart. James said that our mouths can do wonderful things, but it also can utterly condemn us to hell.

Scriptures suggest several ways that our mouth can condemn us. Yet each of these ways also has a spiritual counterpart that is righteous. Many ways our tongue condemns us:

- Boasting (James 3:16)Boasting in the Lord
- Lying (James 5:12)Speaking the Truth
- Blasphemy (James 2:7)Praising
- Vulgarity (James 1:19-21)Speaking with Grace
- Evil Speaking (James 4:11)Edification

The Evil of Boasting

To boast means to speak to cause people to esteem or to speak to make known exploits. Another thought is that it is done to challenge others (Galatians 5:26). The issue is not the words being communicated, it is about intent and purpose. Boasting is an evil thing before God (Romans 1:28, 30,32, 2 Timothy 3:2,5, Psalm 5:5). It is a sin to boast of our worldly achievements (Jeremiahs 9:23, Luke 12:19-20). We see men who did that in Scriptures and were punished by God (Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel 4; Belshazzar – Daniel 5; Herod Agrippa – Acts 12). What are some examples of worldly boasting? When we boast about our success/wealth or intelligence/education, or talents/abilities.

There is also a great danger in boasting about our spiritual achievements. We are warned many times of this issue in Scriptures (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:2, Matthew 6:1). Doing works is NOT boasting, but believing that we are glorified or saved with them is the issue. Consider the Pharisee of Luke 18:10-14 or the Jewish Christians of Romans 2:17. When we boast about our spiritual behavior/knowledge, or works of righteousness (like attendance or giving), or our abstinence from sin, we insult the grace of God.

Also, Scriptures reveal that there is a boasting about our heart's desires. For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and the greedy man curses and spurns the LORD (Psalm 10:3). This refers to to boasting about what we plan to do (Proverbs 27:1). In particular, James warns his readers in James 4:13-16 that making plans as though we are certain of the future is a sinful boasting. He says that instead we ought to say "if the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

How do we overcome boasting? By boasting in the Lord (Psalm 34:2). We need to boast in our confidence and hope in Christ (Hebrews 3:6) and in what Jesus did on the cross for us (Galatians 6:14). We should boast confidently about His grace, His works, and His purpose.

Ultimately, we need to always guard our tongue. By making the effort to boast in the Lord, We give no room to sinful boasting

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.
Psalm 141:3