

Understanding the Bible

Control of your speech

Control of what we say is very critical to our lives in Christ. Words can be very powerful, both for good and for evil. We may remember some people who seem to have an answer for everything. Whatever we say to them, they seem to be able to reply. Even when we feel we have done something special and tell this person, they are able to tell you they have done something better.

There are the leaders; people like Hitler for instance. He was a very charismatic speaker. To look at him, he was a smallish man with no real outstanding features, but when he spoke, people listened and were convinced; most could not find a flaw in his reasoning, even if they knew his conclusions were wrong. He was that kind of speaker; and because of this ability, he became so powerful that even when he was wrong in his conclusions, no one was prepared to stand up and say so.

The Apostle James was concerned with this issue. James 1:26

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

James is talking about those like the example I have given. Communication with others involves not only speaking, but also listening. It is the listener who learns more than the talker. The wise man Solomon wrote about this. Proverbs 1:5

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

In other words, listen and you gain more understanding of what is important.

On the other side, Solomon also had a bit to say about those who talked a lot and did not listen. He called them fools because they were not prepared to listen to anyone else but themselves. Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

Notice what Solomon says here. "*The way of fool is right in his own eyes.*" A foolish person rattles on and he is the only one in the end who thinks he is right in what he has said.

This brings us to the things we say. Solomon wrote of people saying lots of things which mean very little; but we must also think of what we are saying; is it the truth? Is it misleading? Are we being hurtful? Are we repeating things we should not? Are we just being a gossip? All these things are looked at in the Bible. Again Solomon says in Proverbs 18:2 1

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

What does he mean? It means we must be careful of what we say. People have committed suicide because they have been made to look stupid by some remark which was not thought about. Also, people have left the Gospel Truth behind because they were made to look small in front of everyone else. We must be very careful of what we say.

There is a modern saying: "Put brain into gear before engaging mouth"

When you think about it, there is a problem here; we pray to God on the one hand and then we go out and lie and say evil things about others. We are not consistent with our speech. Matthew 12:36

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account there of in the day of judgment.

There is an answer to the dilemma facing us. We know we have a problem with the words we speak; we know that the tongue can just "go off"; we know that our words can control us rather than us controlling them, but Solomon put it into perspective Eccles. 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

When we think of our position before God, we realise that we are insignificant, so what we say and do matters in our responsibility to God. If we let our tongue do its own thing, swearing, cursing, spreading mischief, blaspheming, gossiping etc, we are letting ourselves down and falling down in responsibility to God. If we do what Solomon says about keeping God's commandments, which he describes as the whole duty of man, then we find that we can control our actions much better. We will fail at times; we will do the wrong thing at times, but control of our actions is much easier when we put God first.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. James 3:17-18

These are the qualities we need to exhibit; peace, the ability to listen, gentleness, mercy, even handedness and truthfulness. These qualities will help us to achieve the goal of an entry into God's kingdom.

Note: all quotes are from the King James Version of the Bible.