

BIBLICAL WISDOM #12 - AVOID GOSSIP

JAMES 3:1-12

The tongue is a fire and cannot be "tamed" (taught better). We must control our tongues, or they will control us.

I. THE TONGUE

- A. The largest fires start with only one spark
 - 1. "I wish I had never said that" - too late
 - 2. It holds DEATH and LIFE (Gospel) (PROV. 18:21)
- B. We are to be crucified to sin (GAL 2:20 / ROM. 6:13)
- C. Minister peace / No excuses! COL. 4:6 (PSA. 141:3)

II. THE PROBLEMS

- A. GOSSIP - One who reveals secrets, scandalmonger
 - 1. Malicious: Build self, tearing down others
 - 2. Salacious: Reveal faults of others w/o approval
 - 3. It is on God's list ROM. 1:28-32 (PROV.11:13)
- B. SPREADING RUMORS - Repeating an unconfirmed story
 - 1. "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."
 - 2. We "fictionalize" the reasons "why" w/o knowing
 - 3. Married man has dinner with his sister, etc.
- C. BACKBITING - Malicious speech in someone's absence
 - 1. Backbiting sows wicked seed (GAL. 6:7)
 - 2. It will be revealed to all (NUM. 32:23)
- D. SLANDER - False statement to injure a reputation
 - 1. OT (PROV. 10:18) / NT (1 PET. 2:1)
 - 2. Listed in the Ten Commandments EXO. 20:16
- E. BUSYBODIES - Meddling in the affairs of another
 - 1. Should not be spoken (1 TIM. 5:13)
 - 2. Pay attention to your own living / Let God work!

III. THE ANSWER

- A. Never repeat gossip! Don't be firewood! (PROV. 26:20)
 - 1. Give it an ANGRY look! PROV. 25:23
 - 2. Be a Peacemaker, not a backbiter (MATT 5:9)
- B. Remove root of bitterness with forgiveness HEB. 12:15
- C. Gossip / Busybody Tests:
 - 1. Is this any of my business?
 - 2. Have I been listening to rumors or slander?
 - 3. Has my advice been sought directly by the party?
 - 4. Will I be angry if my advice is not taken?
 - 5. Is my motivation love or my sense of importance?
 - 6. Is my advice based upon Scripture or my opinion?

PROV. 18:21 - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

GAL. 2:20 - "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

ROM. 6:13 - "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

PSA. 141:3 - "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

PROV. 11:13 - "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."

PROV. 16:28 - "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends."

GAL. 6:7 - "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

NUM. 32:23 - "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

PROV. 10:18 - "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool."

1 PET. 2:1 - "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,"

1 TIM. 5:13 - "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

PROV. 26:20 - "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."

MATT. 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."