

David's Prayer

Well did David pray, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah my rock and my redeemer" (Psa. 19:14). Such should be our prayer. Notice the connection between "words" and "hearts" for all acceptable words are based upon the condition of the heart--"out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). Jesus said, "Not that which entered into the mouth defiled the man but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man" (Matt. 15:11). Solomon urged, "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Truly, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

There is much power in the tongue for both good and evil. James urged, "Be not many of you teachers my brethren, knowing we shall receive heavier judgment" (James 3:1). The Holy Spirit gave such warning to caution teachers lest they use their tongue to teach the wrong thing, and James gives an excellent essay on the tongue and what it is capable of doing. He reminds us that by putting bridles into the mouths of horses, one is able to turn about the whole body of the horse. He mentions that the tongue is like a ship's rudder. Although small when compared to other parts of the ship, the course the ship travels is determined by the rudder. So it is with the tongue. The course of our lives now and hereafter is determined in large measure by our tongue.

James said, "Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! and the tongue is a fire..." (James 3:5f). Yesterday, I swept my yard of the fallen leaves. It took a couple of hours to make a huge pile of them, yet flame from one small match quickly made a fire whose tongues reached to tall limbs of a nearby tree. A readied water hose doused the flame on the tree and the pile of leaves was soon reduced to ashes by the hotfire. One small match. One small word can sit aflame families, communities, nations and congregations. The peace of many churches has been destroyed by words which pit brother against brother and wreck that which was years in building. We cannot be too careful in our speech.

We need to look within ourselves weighing each word we allow to exit our lips. The wise man said, "There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:7) We should examine each word we say and ask ourselves "should this be said?" or "must this be said?" Just as an unstruck match ignites no fires, so no unspoken word proves fire to enflame passions and hearts. Remember, we will give account of every

word we speak at the judgment (Mt. 12:36). On the other hand, there are times when failure to speak would be a sin. "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Prov. 15:23).

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