**THE TONGUE – 7**

***JAMES 3:1-12***

**INTRODUCTION** - Today, we continue our study of the tongue, noting various sins that we might find ourselves guilty of.  Today we notice another category – one that is often a result of a lack of self-control – sins of profanity. We live in a society that over the years has become more and more vulgar with its language.  Everywhere we turn, we find those who use profane language.  It is found in the schools, even at the elementary level, at the workplace, when out and about shopping, and virtually everywhere people are found together.  For some, it is so common that hardly a sentence is uttered without some profanity in it.  When we turn on the television, the radio or watch movies, it is far too common.  In some industries it seems to be the expected norm (such as sports, the military, etc.).  It is truly a sad thing, because most who use such language don’t realize how it contributes to the moral decline of society as a whole.  And it is something that if we associate with it too much, it will ‘rub off’ on us.   As Christians, we must remind ourselves that such language is ungodly and very offensive both to God and mankind.

***THE TONGUE AND PROFANITY –***

1. **WHAT IS PROFANITY?**
2. Profanity refers to one who is profane or profane language itself. The word has several meanings in the English language.
   1. As a verb to treat with abuse, irreverence, contempt. To debase by a wrong, unworthy or vulgar use
   2. As an adjective – not concerned with religion or religious purposes, secular
   3. Not holy because unconsecrated, impure or defiled, unsanctified.
   4. Serving to debase or defile what is holy, irreverent, obscene, vulgar
3. Profanity in God’s word –
   1. To defile, to pollute , to desecrate
   2. N.T. defines word in Vine’s as “to cross the threshold” The idea is to trespass prescribed boundaries
   3. **ZEPH. 3:4** – To do violence to the law of God
   4. **PSA. 89:31** – To break the covenant or divine statues
   5. Warnings from God’s word not to profane –
      1. **EX. 31:14** – The Sabbath – It carried the death penalty
      2. **NEH. 3:15-19** – Nehemiah enforces the Sabbath.
      3. **LEV. 18:21** – Profane the name of God by associating it with idolatry.
      4. **PSA. 74:7** – By defiling the dwelling place of God
      5. **PROV. 30:7-9** – By stealing we profane the name of God
      6. **1 TIM. 1:9** – Profane people are associated with ungodly and unholy people. God condemns profanity for by its very definition it alienates one from him.
      7. **2 TIM. 2:16** – God condemns profanity and he tells us to shun profane and idle babblings.
      8. When we speak of profanity with the tongue we are speaking of those who show irreverence to both God and man. With their tongues they are willing to defile that which is sacred and descent with offensive and crude, often ignorant language.
4. **SINS OF PROFANITY** –
5. **USING GOD’S NAME IN VAIN** – How often today do we hear the name of God and Jesus invoked with little thought as to whom they are speaking of Often the use of their names is associated with cursing men or even God himself. Often times their names are used flippantly such as one who is always saying OMG, Jesus Christ, or Good Lord
   1. **EX. 20:7** – The 3rd commandment. The warning is made that those who do will not be found guiltless before him. One thing the Jews understood was the importance of the name of God.His name was held with utmost reverence.
   2. **LEV. 24:11-16** – Records the stoning of a woman’s son who blasphemed (speaking evil) the name of the Lord and cursed
   3. **1 TIM. 6:1** – We are told to hold his name in reverence. Paul did not want the name of God and his doctrine to be blasphemed.
   4. **ROM. 2:24** – We need to make sure that the name of god is not blasphemed as a result of the way we conduct our lives and fail to control our tongues.
6. **CURSING** – We sometimes use this word to refer to one who uses foul language, but there is actually a deeper meaning. The term curse means to pronounce evil to befall someone. Many of the words we consider profane and vulgar are actually curse words because one is calling on God to damn a soul to hell, or for misery to follow them in life. These words are often uttered in heated anger.
   1. **MATT. 26:74** – When Peter denied the Lord he swore and cursed
   2. **JAMES 3:10** – Form the same mouth proceed blessing and cursings….these things ought not to be so.
   3. **ROM. 12:14** – Even when we are tempted by being mistreated do not succumb to the temptation.
   4. **1 PET. 3:9** – Listen to the advice of Peter we are not to return evil for evil.
7. **COARSE JESTING** – Or filthy communication is another profane use of language. This would include off color stories and suggestive jokes with filthy implications which are often sexual in nature.
   1. **EPH. 4:29** - simply states that we should not let ANY corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths.  Later in that letter, he elaborates in more detail.  Ephesians 5:3-4 says, **“*But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks*.”**  In this verse there are at least 3 terms to give consideration to here:  
      ***Filthiness*** – a word that means *indecent*.  The WS Dictionary says of this word, “that which when exposed by the light makes the person ashamed of himself.” Ask yourself, “Would I say this if Jesus was standing here?”  
      ***Foolish talking*** – talk that makes one look foolish.  NOTE: Does this say that we can never joke around?  I do not believe so.  First the word foolish is used.  This would be one acting without understanding.  He speaks inappropriately either because of the time or the situation.  Or his words are not weighed and he says something silly that he immediately realizes it was wrong.  He looks foolish. In other words, there is a time for everything – cf. Ecclesiastes 3:4, “a time to laugh…”  
      But there are times when we need to cut out the silly, joking.  
      ***Coarse jesting*** – the word *coarse* is not found in the KJV, ASV, Darby, etc.  The word jesting, in its basest form could refer to one who is simply witty with his words.  But most scholars agree that its use here dealt with such language that has deteriorated to unacceptable conversation – i.e. hurtful insults, suggestive jokes, a scoffer, etc. Thayer refers to it as “low jesting.”   
      The text also ads to this word the phrase, “which are fitting” – meaning that we need STANDARDS in our conversations (and jokes).
   2. **COL. 3:8-9** – Also calls upon us to put away filthy communication out of our mouths.
8. **SWEARING** – Sometimes we use the word as another word for cursing.
   1. **MARK 14:71** – Example of Peter
   2. Warnings in God’s word about flippantly taking oaths
      1. **JAMES 5:12** – Listen to James
      2. **MATT. 23:16-22** – We can see that oaths were abused by Jewish leaders.
      3. **MATT. 5:33-37** – Listen to Jesus - When you swear deceitfully (you don’t really mean it) or lightly, it becomes profanity as you are declaring an oath in the presence of God.  It is that which prompted Jesus to simply state, “do not swear at all… let your yes be yes…”
      4. **ECCL. 5:1-6** – Consider the warnings of Solomon when he spoke of vows which is an oath..    
         Have you ever heard someone say, “I swear it is true” or “I swear on my mother’s grave”?
9. **EUPHESISMS** –
   1. The word is defined by Webster’s Collegiate as, “*the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant.”* More simply stated, A euphemism is a substitute for a curse word or irreverently using God’s name.
   2. The Bible does not mention euphemisms per se.  But some of the principles we have discussed in this lesson should help us weigh their use in our lives.  If it is wrong to improperly and cheaply use God’s name, then it is just as wrong to use a substitute for that name.  If a word invokes a curse or anything profane, a substitute for that word that implies the same meaning would be just as wrong.  I think of listening to the radio and you hear the “bleep” following an adjective which obviously tells you what word profanity word uttered.
   3. **EPH. 5:3-4** - Speaks of speech that “is not fitting” which could apply to euphemisms. Christians ought to work on eliminating such words from their vocabulary, because at best, it shows a lack of total self-control with the tongue.  Like everything else in our lives, we should not see how close we can get to the line of sin without crossing it.  Our goal should be to stay as far away from that line as possible.
10. **DEALING WITH PROFANITY** –
    1. **JAMES 1:19** - Realize what you are actually saying and doing.   
       AGAIN, fits in here.  BE quick to hear, slow to speak…”  
       Do you really want to be guilty of cursing God or another?  Do you really want to be known for having a vulgar tongue?
    2. **JAMES 1:26** – If we are guilty repent! If you stumble (and you will) get up and keep going, striving to do better as each day goes by.
    3. **JAMES 3:2** – We must learn to exercise self-control when it comes to our tongue.

**CONCLUSION** –

How are we doing when it comes to exercising self-control over the tongue?

If need be then repent and ask God to help you with this problem.

We need to use our tongues to glorify God.