
Words of Truth

When They Try To Provoke You To Speak

By: Brian A. Yeager

Read this carefully: *"And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him"* (Luke 11:37-54).

Jesus rebuked the hypocritical Pharisees and lawyers. Since sinfulness is indefensible, there was no just response they could offer. So, they decided to urge him vehemently [excessively] to talk of many things. Their goal was to catch something out of His mouth that they could use against Him. Their tactic certainly had some wisdom behind it. It is a fact that the more a person talks the more likely that person is to say something that should not be said (Proverbs 10:19 and Ecclesiastes 10:13-14). Now, If the world did this to Jesus, what do you think they will do with your words?

Sinners Want You To Talk More

Jesus referred to Himself as being wiser than Solomon (Matthew 12:38-42). That is a significant statement because Solomon, through the Spirit of God, was the wisest man on earth in his time (I Kings 4:29-34). Solomon was granted wisdom beyond any before or that would rise after him (I Kings 3:12). Yet, we know that Jesus had an advantage over all men; for He was not merely a man (Isaiah 9:1-7, Matthew 1:21-23, John 1:1-5, John 8:58 [cf. Exodus 3:14-15], Acts 20:28 [cf. Ephesians 5:25], and Romans 9:1-5). Neither you or I are as wise as Solomon was. We certainly are not nearly in the camp of the wisdom of Jesus either. If evil men perceived they could trap the wisest man to ever walk the earth through much speaking; what does that mean for you and I?

A certain Psalm says that the wicked watch the righteous. The goal is to slay the righteous (Psalms 37:32). Another Psalm says that they hid and sought to twist the words of that Psalmist (Psalms 56:5-6). Sinners try tactics such as attempting to tangle a person in words (Matthew 22:15). Some lay down trap questions (Mark 10:2-12). Sometimes the wicked employ others to be their ears so that they can catch something out of the mouth of the righteous (Mark 12:13 and Luke 20:20). Are you cautious about what you say and who you say it around? Do you easily drop your guard? Do you remember that you, like the disciples of Christ in the first century (Matthew 10:16 and Luke 10:3), are prey among the wolves? Do you remind yourself that we live in a wicked world (I John 5:19)? Are you wise in how you handle yourself and how you speak when around people of the world (Colossians 4:5-6)? Do you understand how often it is best to say nothing or little at all in many circumstances?

It Is Wise To Spare Your Words

The Scriptures say: *"He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding... Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"* (Proverbs 17:27-28 and James 1:19). In any discussion, regardless of the people we are talking to, we should always think before we speak (Proverbs 15:28). Every word you speak can and will have an eternal impact on your life (Matthew 12:34-37).

Conclusion

At school, work, the park, and even in biblical discussions; be cautious when someone is provoking you to talk. Any question, even if it appears harmless, could be a set-up for some unforeseen trap down the road. Remember that there are people who spend much time in thinking about how to trap the righteous (Psalms 38:12). There are many deceivers in the world (II John 1:7-11). Don't be caught off-guard.