Words of Truth

Controlling Those Words
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A faithful Christian man is walking through a shopping mall. He is minding his own business. He has a lot to accomplish. He is on a short schedule. He is walking briskly. As he approaches a turn into a store – BAM! He is run into head on by an individual texting on his cellular phone. This faithful Christian man is knocked to the ground. His bags go flying. He lands hard and hurts his tailbone. The person on the phone texting says, "excuse YOU" and then walks off stepping right over this faithful Christian. The words that enter into the mind of this faithful Christian are, well, things that wouldn't be appropriate to print in this article. Something like: "*&%$#@#^". I think we all get the point.

This faithful, spiritually minded man, is now struggling with the fact that he wanted to say something that he knew he shouldn't say. He cannot get those words, immediately, out of his mind. What should he Scripturally do? Some would, wrongfully, declare that he sinned just by having those words in his mind to begin with. Some would cite this verse: *"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things"* (Matthew 12:35). What that person would do is ignore the context of that verse which goes on to say: *"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"* (Matthew 12:36-37).

In the article last week, it was biblically proven that thoughts have to be acted upon for those thoughts to be sinful (James 1:13-16). As we discussed last week, that does not free us to just let our minds run wild (Romans 12:1-3 and II Corinthians 10:5). We need our thoughts to be right (Proverbs 12:5). However, as the context of Matthew 12:35 states, it is the acting upon those thoughts that is sinful. Stopping the wrong word or words that enter into one's mind from coming out of the mouth is what we will learn is the key in this subject.

Stopping Yourself From Saying The Wrong Thing

We will look at some Scriptures that show us to guard what we say. Then, we'll see that it is not just a matter of words following this point. Here are those Scriptures: *"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me… In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise... He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction… 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... 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… For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek*

peace, and ensue it" (Psalms 39:1, Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 13:3, Proverbs 17:27-28, James 1:26, and I Peter 3:10-11).

The Word(s) Are Not All There Is To This Subject Matter

All too often people say that corrupt and filthy communication (Ephesians 4:29 and Colossians 3:8) means "cuss words". Now, that is not <u>entirely</u> untrue. Profane terms are certainly corrupt communication because it falls into foolish talking (Ephesians 5:3-4), etc. However, who defines what is a "cuss word"? Isn't there an appropriate time for someone to be called an "ass" (Jeremiah 2:23-24 and Hosea 8:9), a "bastard" (Hebrews 12:5-13), or even a "female dog" [b-word] (Isaiah 56:10-12 and Matthew 7:6)? Are we to conclude that terms like "piss" (II Kings 18:27) or "dung" (Philippians 3:8) are cussing? You may never be comfortable saying one or some of those words. I was not comfortable enough to write out the term that means female dog. That does not make them sinful though. If spoken in a contextually true manner, at a time wherein such a term is lawful, expedient, and edifying (I Corinthians 10:23); one cannot say someone has erred.

The point being; the word or words by themselves are not the only focal points of what a person should say in certain circumstances. "Ass" can be just as wrong as "stubborn fool". "Bastard" can be just as right as "fatherless child". The questions really come back to whether or not the spoken words of a person were thought through or said rashly? Is the time and place right? The same is true with "euphemisms". The Bible is full of euphemisms (Genesis 4:1, Genesis 38:9, Deuteronomy 23:1, Deuteronomy 25:11, II Kings 18:27, Matthew 15:17, and I Corinthians 7:3). Used correctly, words have appropriate contexts and meanings even if they are commonly thought of as strong or even inappropriate language.

When you boil down to the heart of the matter, one must use self-control when speaking (James 3:2-18). God expects us, who are Christians, to grow and get to a point wherein we can practice temperance [self-control] (II Peter 1:5-6). If you get hurt, use a word that is appropriate to express yourself. If a rude person runs into you, respond in a way that is controlled by your godly conscience. We should not "lose it" and say whatever first enters into our minds. As my autistic daughter says: "Stop. Breathe. And Think" (Taylor Yeager).

Stop. Breathe. Think.

Don't be rash with your mouth (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Take time to breathe and be sure what you are about to say is pleasing to God (Colossians 3:17). Think about your words (Proverbs 15:28). God says: *"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards"* (Proverbs 29:11).

Conclusion

The Christian man, who was filled with carnal anger at the mall, should have said and done nothing in his present frame of mind (Proverbs 15:1-2 and Proverbs 16:23). Consider these words of wisdom: *"He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated"* (Proverbs 14:17). Think before you speak. Understand that death and life are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Control your words so that the words you speak are from our Lord (Proverbs 16:1; cf. I Peter 4:11).