

## Getting to the Heart of Sinful Speech, Part 2 (James, Proverbs) – 10-25-2009 PM Service

### The Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards (1722-1723, age 19-20)

*Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake* [written in 1722 when he was 19; finished writing the 70 resolutions in 1723].

31. *Resolved*, Never to say anything at all against any body, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by, the test of this Resolution.
34. *Resolved*, In narrations never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity [truth].
36. *Resolved*, Never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call to it.
70. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak.

### Applying James 3 Further – How is Our Heart Sanctified / Changed?

Jesus prayed “*sanctify them in [or by] the truth; your word is truth*” (John 17:17)

Salvation is a work of God alone, completed when God regenerates us, but *sanctification* is an ongoing work of God done through the cooperation and active effort of the regenerated believer (in this context by taking in God’s Word and applying it). God not only gives a new nature and His Spirit to help us at initial salvation, but God continues to sanctify (transform and change) the believer in this process of Christian growth. He sanctifies through His Word’s truth that renews the mind so that we won’t be conformed to the world’s way of thinking/speaking (Rom. 12:2)

### “Twenty Resolution on the Use of the Tongue from the Book of James” - Sinclair Ferguson

(From *The Power of Words*, edited by John Piper and Justin Taylor, Crossway Books, p. 56-59)

1. I resolve to ask God for wisdom to speak out of a single-minded devotion to him (1:5-8).
2. I resolve to boast only in the exultation I receive in Jesus Christ and also in the humiliation I receive for Jesus Christ (1:9-10).
3. I resolve to set a watch over my mouth [and to not blame or complain against God] (1:13).
4. I resolve to be constantly quick to hear and slow to speak (1:19).
5. I resolve to learn the gospel way of speaking to both rich and poor (2:1-4).
6. I resolve to speak in the present consciousness of my final judgment (2:12).
7. I resolve never to stand on anyone’s face with words I employ (2:15-16) [clarified later as “demean, despise, or cause despair,” ex: by empty and insincere words instead of helping].
8. I resolve never to claim as reality in my life what I do not truly experience (3:14).
9. I resolve to resist quarrelsome words as evidence of a bad heart that needs [change] (4:1).
10. I resolve never to speak evil of another (4:11).
11. I resolve never to boast in any thing I will accomplish (4:13).
12. I resolve to speak as one subject to the providences of God
13. I resolve never to grumble. The judge is at the door (5:9).
14. I resolve never to allow anything but total integrity in everything I say (5:12).
15. I resolve to speak to God in prayer whenever I suffer (5:13a).
16. I resolve to sing praises to God whenever I’m cheerful (5:13b).
17. I resolve to ask for the prayers of others when I’m in need (5:14).
18. I resolve to confess it whenever I have failed (5:16a).
19. I resolve to pray with others for one another whenever I am together with them (5:16b).
20. I resolve to speak words of restoration when I see another wander (5:19).

## Further Help for Our Speech in the Book of Proverbs

Recommended Further Study Book: Proverbs for Parenting: A Topical Guide for Child Raising

**4:23** Watch over **your heart** with all diligence, For **from it flow the springs of life.** <sup>24</sup> Put away from you **a deceitful mouth** And put **devious speech** far from you ... (all quotations from NASB, unless otherwise indicated)

**6:2-5** <sup>2</sup> If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth, <sup>3</sup> Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, **Go, humble yourself,** and importune your neighbor [ESV “plead urgently with”]. <sup>4</sup> Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids; <sup>5</sup> Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter’s hand And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

**12:13** An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, But the righteous will escape from trouble.

**6:16** There are six things which **the LORD** hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: <sup>17</sup> Haughty eyes, **a lying tongue...** <sup>19</sup> A **false witness** who utters lies, And **one who spreads strife among brothers.**

**8:13** “The fear of the LORD is to **hate evil; Pride and arrogance** and the evil way And **the perverted mouth,** I hate.”

**17:9** (ESV) Whoever **covers an offense** seeks love, but he who **repeats** a matter separates close friends.

### Practical principles to apply, memorize, meditate on further:

**10:19** When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

**11:12-13** (ESV) Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent. Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.

**13:3** The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

**15:1** A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

**17:27-28** He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.

**18:13** He who gives an **answer before he hears,** It is folly and shame to him.

**20:19** He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore **do not associate with a gossip.**

**25:28** Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

**26:20-28** (NIV) <sup>20</sup> **Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.** <sup>21</sup> As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. <sup>22</sup> The words of a **gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man’s inmost parts.** <sup>23</sup> Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are **fervent lips with an evil heart** ... <sup>27</sup> If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, **it will roll back on him.** <sup>28</sup> A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

### Positive motivations to pursue a transformed tongue:

**15:4** A soothing tongue is a tree of life ...

**10:11** The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life ...

**10:20** The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, The heart of the wicked is worth little. <sup>21</sup> The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of understanding.

**12:25** Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad.

**15:23** A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!

**16:21** *The wise in heart will be called understanding, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness ...*  
 ... <sup>23</sup> *The heart of the wise instructs his mouth And adds persuasiveness to his lips.* <sup>24</sup> *Pleasant words are a honeycomb, Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.*

**20:15** *There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; But the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.*

**23:15-16** *My son, if your heart is wise, My own heart also will be glad; And my inmost being will rejoice When your lips speak what is right.*

**24:26 (NIV)** *An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.*

**25:11** *Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken [or “fitly spoken”] in right circumstances.*

Prayers from the Psalms for further application (review from this morning):

**Ps 141:3** *Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.*

**Ps 19:14** *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD ...*

**Psalms 71:8 (NKJV)** *Let my mouth be filled with Your praise And with Your glory all the day.*

The mouth will speak from what fills the heart, and what a great prayer to pray that we would be filled with God and His glory, so that it will come out our mouth all day. How can our hearts and mouths be sanctified or changed to this? The power for lasting change is found in God’s Word, heart-changed, mind-renewed, truth-driven, gospel-produced, Spirit-empowered, Christ-centered, God-glorifying transforming sanctifying grace.

We aren’t sanctified by mere external ritual or religion or routine done in the flesh. We aren’t sanctified passively on one end of the spectrum (some teach you don’t need to discipline ourselves or confess sin, etc., just recognize who you are in Jesus and that sanctifies you). We do need to know who we are in Christ *and* we also need to by His power within us fight our sin actively, confess our sin, discipline ourselves, and deny self daily to be more like Christ. Sanctification is not passive on the one hand, or by mere personal effort, penance or punishing self on the other hand, or prayer alone; God’s Word says we are sanctified in the truth of God’s Word. Christ is our sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30), and we are in Christ at the moment of salvation, when the process begins, but we need more and more of Christ and His Word *in us* to transform our hearts, then our speech. We must be in the Word and the Word must be in us (Col. 3:16), so we can have our minds changed and renewed (Rom. 12:2), as we put off sinful thinking and speaking and put on Christ-likeness.

Colossians 3 <sup>1</sup> *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*** <sup>2</sup> **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth** ... <sup>3</sup> *But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.* <sup>4</sup> **Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,** <sup>5</sup> *and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—...* <sup>6</sup> **So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;** <sup>7</sup> **bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.** <sup>8</sup> **Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.** <sup>9</sup> **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,** *to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.* <sup>10</sup> **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,** *with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*