



The Good News

January 24th, 2021

Volume 21, Issue 4

“A Lying Tongue”

By Michael McCleary

Of all the temptations with which we struggle, which is the biggest? Perhaps we struggle with the lusts of the flesh, or having a good attitude towards worship, or having sinful thoughts. There are countless temptations with which we, as Christians in a world full of sin, can struggle.

James says, in **3:2**, “For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” Essentially, if we can develop the discipline and self-control that it takes to control our tongue, then we have what it takes to control the rest of our body as well. Yet, that is a little easier said than done, isn’t it? He goes on to say in **vs. 8**, “But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

What kind of sins can we commit with our tongue? We can take the Lord’s name in vain; we can curse and use profanity. As James talks about in chapter three, we can start flames that become huge fires just by simple little words, such as in gossip, or unkind words. Or, in a moment of rage, we can say things that we do not mean, but the consequences could remain with us for the rest of our lives.

For all these sins that we can commit with our tongues, I wonder if the hardest thing to guard against is lying. Other sins, such as profanity, are easily shown to a person to be in error by the Gospel, and the same for gossip and unkind words. Yet, lying is one sin that, unless there is proof to show the words as being a lie, only me (and God) will ever know about it. While James’ context of **chapter 3** is specifically dealing with false teaching, the damage

of what can be done with our tongues can never be underestimated. What happens if we become used to doing the damage? What happens when we justify a lie simply because we want to get out of trouble? Or if we want to avoid taking responsibility for something left undone, or done poorly? Just as Paul says to Timothy, “speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.” (**1 Tim. 4:2**) Paul is talking about Christians who fall away to other doctrines and teach things that are contrary to Christ, yet the principle is the same: the more you give in to sin, the less you feel the shame of sin, and the less you care. God calls the lying tongue one of the six things He hates and one of the seven that are abominations to Him, in **Prov. 6:17**.

Does it always have to be a bald-faced lie? We may find that exaggeration becomes so natural to us, that we may sometimes do it without realizing it. Brothers and sisters, when we say something is when it is not, that is a lie, whether it is a bald-faced lie, a harmless little lie, or just exaggerating. They are all lies, even if no one is hurt by it. It makes it so much easier on our consciences if no one gets hurt, and our lie can’t be proven as a lie.

Will we allow such a little thing, such as a harmless little lie, or a mere exaggeration, to keep us out of heaven, losing our souls in hell? **Rev. 22:15**, “But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.” Brethren, we must guard ourselves against lying. Our souls depend on it.