

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR KEY SOCIAL ISSUES

Lesson #12

The Tongue – Lit on Fire by Hell!

James, when writing about the tongue, says in **Jam. 3:6**, “*And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.*” A scary thought! And since God said it – it is true! The last phrase in the Greek might literally be translated “*is set on fire by hell itself.*” While the heart is the command center of our lives, the tongue is the exhaust pipe that allows the verbally noxious fumes and evil vapors within us to come out. When we use our tongues in an ungodly way, it exposes the sin within us, and pollutes and defiles those around us.

A study of the Scriptures reveal there are many sins that proceed from our mouths. While this is to be expected among those who have no love for God, it should not be the case among Christians. Yet the church in many cases is following the world and learning their verbal etiquette from the sassy, sarcastic, profane, media role models constantly put before them. Brash, assertive, cutting remarks by bold, boisterous women appeal to many in the church and provide entertainment for them. The church has slid far down the slope of base uses of the tongue. We feel we are honoring God because the world is further down the slope than we are. We forget that we shouldn't be on the slope at all but standing on the solid rock rim of the canyon far above.

Go into almost any gathering of Christian women and proclaim that God desires them to be “*gentle and quiet spirits,*” and a low rumbling of objection and a faint scoffing of discontent can be heard. Many Professing Christian men are loud, impulsive, proud, boastful and unkind in their speech, especially when they are not around other believers. Their speech, like the chameleon, adapts to their surroundings. Many youth who claim to know Christ speak first and think second, or never think about what they are saying at all. Their tongues are like boat motors with no boat attached. Others who claim Christ find it acceptable to open their mouth and let the sewage of the heart spew forth upon those around them, regardless of the consequences. It is clear that the church is having a crisis of the tongue. Because of this, we are going to examine evil uses of the tongue in this key social issue lesson. We will search the Word of God to gain clarity and find solutions on how to use our tongues for God's glory.

I. DEFINITIONS OF VARIOUS SINFUL USES OF THE TONGUE

Below is a list of sins committed by the tongue. The list is not comprehensive. Some terms have been grouped because some are synonyms or closely related.

- A. **The Arguing Tongue** is the tongue that seeks to disagree with others. While not all arguing is sinful, when coupled by evil motives or an absence of love, arguing becomes sinful.
 - 1. **Quarreling** is to argue in anger.
 - 2. **Wrangling** is to argue persistently and peevishly, often about insignificant details or subject matter.

3. There are many dishonest and deceptive ways of arguing which are often used by those who are trying to promote evil or present something erroneous as being true. For a list of terms and their definitions such as: the Big Lie, Half Truth, Repetition, Band Wagon, Plain Folk, Glittering Generalities, Loaded Words, Association, Suggestion, Intimidation, Fear Mongering, Hate Mongering, Scare Tactics, Circular Reasoning, Non-Sequitur, Post Hoc, Circumstantial Evidence, Either-Or Fallacy, Personification, Analogy, Reductionism, Authority, Extrapolation, Statistics, Best-in-the-Field Fallacy, Shifting the Burden of Proof, Self-Referential Fallacy, Ad Hominem, Sidestepping, Red Herring, Equivocation, Straw Man, Card Stacking, Bluffing, Appeasement, Humor, Subjectivity, and Visualization and ungodly ways of using these forms of argumentation see <http://www.creationsafaris.com/crevbd.htm> and look under the three categories of *Propaganda Tactics*, *Logical Fallacies*, and *Smokescreens*.

- B. **The Belittling or Derogatory Tongue** is the tongue that purposefully reduces or dismisses the importance of someone or thing, usually in an attempt to make them or it look bad or worse than they or it really is.

- C. **The Blaspheming Tongue** is the tongue that speaks disrespectfully, falsely, or disparagingly about God.

- D. **The Boasting or Proud Tongue** is the tongue that exalts or exaggerates one's abilities, accomplishments, or attributes for the purpose of gaining attention, praise, or some advantage.

- E. **The Complaining, Grumbling, and Whining Tongue** is the tongue that expresses discontent or unhappiness with its present situation. Whining is to complain and grumble in an irritating way.

- F. **The Coarse, Unwholesome, Evil Speaking Tongue** is a tongue that speaks in any ungodly, morally corrupting, or vulgar way.

- G. **The Flattering Tongue** is the tongue that speaks well of someone, not out of sincerity, but in order to gain their favor in order to receive something or gain some advantage over them.

- H. **The Gossiping, Evil Whispering, Tale Bearing Tongue** is the tongue that spreads rumors or fruitless tales about someone else, in private, for the purpose of bringing harm or reproach upon them, to satisfy curiosity, to provide entertainment, or some other wicked motive.

- I. **The Lying Tongue and It's Many Offspring**
 1. **Dissimulation** is the act of deception by concealing one's true identity or ability in order to gain an advantage.

2. **Distortion** is to purposefully distort what one believes or knows to be true in order to gain something.
 3. **Exaggeration** is to purposefully stretch the truth beyond its factual bounds in order to gain something.
 4. **Perjury** is to purposefully lie after taking an oath to tell the truth.
 5. **Simulation** is the act of pretending to be something you are not in order to deceive and gain an advantage.
 6. **Subtracting** is the act of purposefully leaving out important information in order to make someone think something false or partially true is completely true and this to gain some advantage.
 7. **Bearing False Witness** is to purposefully lie about what happened in a particular circumstance in order to gain something.
- J. **The Name Calling Tongue** is the tongue that labels or calls others unkind, ungodly, or degrading names in an attempt to hurt them or make them look bad.
- K. **The Rash, Impulsive, Uncontrolled, Piercing Tongue** is the tongue that speaks before thinking, before listening, and is driven by the carnal emotions rather than the mind guided by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
- L. **The Sarcastic Tongue** is the tongue that makes remarks that mean something different or the exact opposite of what is said, or which has a secondary mocking or degrading meaning. In the Bible, God, the authors of Scripture, and Jesus use sarcasm in reference to evil men or their wicked behavior.
- M. **The Silent Tongue** is the tongue that should say something, but doesn't, usually because of the fear of man and love of self.
- N. **The Slandorous, Backbiting, or Maligning Tongue** is the tongue that makes public accusations or charges in an attempt to defame another person's reputation or character. Slander usually leads to gossip, a private discussion of what is slanderously reported.
- O. **The Swearing or Cursing Tongue** is the tongue that utters ungodly, carnal language, expletives, and oaths.
- P. **The Tongue that Takes the Lord's Name in Vain** is a tongue that uses God's name in any irreverent, loose, or disrespectful way. It is to use God's name or any of its derivatives as a filler, a swear word, an oath, without respect or intent to honor God.

"Many a man's tongue, broke his nose."

II. KEY SCRIPTURES ADDRESSING SPECIFIC SINS OF THE TONGUE

In searching the Scriptures one quickly discovers that sins of the tongue are one of the most often addressed sins in the Bible. God has a lot to say about the regulation of our tongue and for a good reason. Below I have attempted to quote two key Scriptures for each sin of the tongue mentioned and in some cases extra verse references will be cited for further study.

A. The Arguing Tongue

1. **Acts 9:29** And he [Paul] was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death.
2. **Acts 23:9** And there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"
3. **Quarreling (a type of arguing)**
 - a) **II Tim. 2:23-24** But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. 24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,
 - b) **Jam. 4:2-3** You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.
 - c) **See also: Prov. 17:14; 18:1; 20:3; I Cor. 1:10-15; II Cor. 12:20**
4. **Wrangling (a type of arguing)**
 - a) **II Tim. 2:14** Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.
 - b) **Tit. 2:9-11** But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

B. The Belittling or Derogatory Tongue

1. **Lk. 5:21** The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”
2. **Acts 17:18** And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, “What would this idle babbler wish to say?” Others, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

C. The Blaspheming Tongue

1. **I Tim. 1:20** Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.
2. **Rev. 16:9** Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

D. The Boasting or Proud Tongue

1. **Psa. 12:3-4** May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things; 4 Who have said, “With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?”
2. **Jam. 4:16** But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

E. The Complaining, Grumbling, and Whining Tongue

1. **Phil. 2:14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing;
2. **James 5:9** Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.
3. **See also: Psa. 106:25; Mt. 20:11; Lk. 15:2; Jn. 6:41, 43, 61; 7:12; I Cor. 10:1-11;** The Key Social Issue on Contentment also addresses grumbling and complaining

F. The Coarse, Unwholesome, Evil Speaking Tongue

1. **Eph. 5:3-4** But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
2. **II Tim. 2:16-17** But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene.

G. The Flattering Tongue

1. **I Thess. 2:5-6** For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.
2. **Jude 16** These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

H. The Gossiping, Evil Whispering, Tale Bearing Tongue

1. **Prov. 18:6-8** A fool's lips bring strife, And his mouth calls for blows. 7 A fool's mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul. 8 The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.
2. **I Tim. 5:13** At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also **gossips** and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.
3. **See also: Prov. 11:13; 17:9; 18:18; 20:19; 25:8-10; II Cor. 12:20; I Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:3**

I. The Lying Tongue and It's Many Offspring

1. **Prov. 12:22** Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.
2. **Col. 3:9** Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.
3. **See also: Lev. 19:11; Prov. 6:16-19; 21:6; Jn. 8:44; Acts 5:4; Rev. 21:8**

4. **Deception (a type of lying)**

- a) **Prov. 26:18-19** Like a madman who throws Firebrands, arrows and death, 19 So is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, “Was I not joking?”
- b) **Prov. 26:23-26** Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross Are burning lips and a wicked heart. 24 He who hates disguises it with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart. 25 When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart. 26 Though his hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

5. **Dissimulation (a type of lying)**

- a) **I Sam. 21:13** So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard.
- b) **Acts 23:12-15** When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who formed this plot. 14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 “Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near the place.”
- c) **See also II Sam. 14:2-3; II Kings 10:18-24; Psa. 55:21;**

6. **Distortion (a type of lying)**

- a) **Gen. 3:1-5** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” 2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ” 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! 5 “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

- b) **II Pet. 3:16** as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

7. **Exaggeration (a type of lying)**

- a) **Numb. 13:32-33** So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. 33 “There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”
- b) **Lk. 7:33-34** “For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ 34 “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’

8. **Perjury (a type of lying)**

- a) **Lev. 19:12** ‘You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord.
- b) **I Tim. 1:8-10** But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.
- c) **See also Lev. 6:3; Zech. 5:4; Mal. 3:5; Mt. 26:60; Acts 6:13-14**

9. **Simulation (a type of lying)**

- a) **Lk. 20:20** So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.
- b) **II Cor. 11:14-15** No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

10. **Bearing False Witness (a type of lying)**

- a) **Prov. 19:9** A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will perish.
- b) **Prov. 25:18** Like a club and a sword and a sharp arrow Is a man who bears false witness against his neighbor.

J. **The Name Calling Tongue**

- 1. **Mt. 5:22** “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.
- 2. **Jn. 8:48** The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

K. **The Rash, Impulsive, Uncontrolled, Piercing Tongue**

- 1. **Prov. 12:18** There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- 2. **James 1:19-20** This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

L. **The Sarcastic Tongue**

- 1. **I Kings 18:25-27** So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.” 26 Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. 27 It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.”
- 2. **Jer. 10:3-5** For the customs of the peoples are delusion; Because it is wood cut from the forest, The work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool. 4 “They decorate it with silver and with gold; They fasten it with nails and with hammers So that it will not totter. 5 “Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot walk! Do not fear them, For they can do no harm, Nor can they do any good.”

M. The Silent Tongue

1. **Ezek. 3:18** “When I say to the wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.
2. **Mk. 8:38** “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

N. The Slandering, Backbiting, or Maligning Tongue

1. Lev. 19:16 ‘You shall not go about as a **slanderer** among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord.
2. Psa. 101:5 Whoever secretly **slanders** his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.
3. **See also: II Sam. 19:27; Psa. 5:9; 10:7; 15:3; 36:3; 50:20; 55:21; 101:5; Prov. 16:28; 20:19; 25:23; 30:10 Jer. 6:28; 9:4; Ezek. 22:9; Mt. 15:19; Mk. 7:22; Rom. 1:30; II Cor. 12:20; I Cor. 4:13; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8**

O. The Swearing or Cursing Tongue

1. **Mt. 26:73-74** A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.” 74 Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed.
2. **Rom. 3:13-14** “Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving,” “The poison of asps is under their lips”; 14 “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

P. The Tongue that Takes the Lord’s Name in Vain

1. **Ex. 20:7** “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.
2. **Psa. 139:19-20** O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. 20 For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies take Your name in vain.

III. KEY SCRIPTURES REGARDING THE GENERAL USE OF THE TONGUE

- A. **Mt. 12:33-37** “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 “The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”
- B. **Rom. 1:28-32** And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.
- C. Col. 3:8-10 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 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—
- D. Col. 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.
- E. II Tim. 3:1-5 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.
- F. James 3:1-12 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses’ mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. 4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. 7 For every

species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

IV. **APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TO LIFE**

Below are a selection of scenarios which are common in life. Consider each one in light of what was learned above and apply biblical principles and reasoning to each.

- A. Someone comes up to you and says, “You know what I heard, so and so. . .” and then they tell you about someone else’s family problems.
- B. You have someone complain to you that another person in the church is doing something they don’t like and they express their concern and frustration about this other person with you.
- C. You are talking with someone and they mention the name of a man in the church who they saw alone with a woman who wasn’t his wife. They speculate concerning who the woman is and if the man is having an affair.
- D. A woman asks you to give her some marriage counseling. You listen and as she goes on and on you feel more and more sorry for her because her husband sounds like he is a good candidate for the antichrist.
- E. The elders gather at their monthly meeting to talk about someone who is in sin and they discuss what to do about it and how to help the person out.
- F. The elders have decided to take a certain course of action that several people disagree with. Each Sunday you see them after church huddled together in a small group. One day you saunter on over and begin to talk to them. They begin to question you about what you think about the elders decision and if you disagree and begin to express their disagreement and reasons why they disagree.
- G. A person comes to you irritated that another person in the church confronted them about some issues in their life. They complain that the person was so self righteous and express their anger towards the other person’s actions.

- H. You are talking to a person and asking them about their testimony and how they came to Christ. They tell you. Several months later you hear that person giving their testimony to another group but this time it is different or at least seems to be different.
- I. You are receiving counsel from one of the pastoral staff about a sin issue in your life and the pastor mentions that he has talked to other pastors on staff about your particular struggle and how best to help you.
- J. You have a friend who is in construction and you notice his truck outside a house that is being remodeled. You stop to say hello. As you approach the construction site, you hear your friend angrily swearing about something.
- K. You work at a large company with several other believers. During lunch one day several unbelievers are telling dirty jokes. You see your friends laughing along and making their own comments which are less than honorable to the Lord.
- L. You are standing outside the church building one Sunday and you see two teenagers talking, one of them, a daughter of one of the elders, has a very mean and sneering look on her face and you hear her say, "I don't care what you think!", and then she walks away. Her friend turns and you can see that she is crying.
- M. A man is asked to consider being an elder. After filling out the standard elder packet and meeting with two of the elders for an interview, he is asked to give his testimony to the church. The church is then asked to consider this man and if they have any concerns about him being an elder they should come forward. Several people come forward and express concerns. When asked if they have talked to the man being considered for elder about these things, they say, "No."
- N. You have heard from several people who you are acquaintances with that a particular pastor in town has bought into several aberrant doctrines. They warn you to stay away from him so as not to be corrupted by his doctrine.

Profanity has plagued society for as long as people have had tongues in their mouths. John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress, prior to his conversion, was so profane he could hardly speak a word without attaching a curse to it. But one thing cured him. He was standing one day before a shop window, cursing and swearing freely, and a woman passed by. She herself was a "very loose and ungodly wretch," yet she rebuked him, saying that he was "the ungodliest fellow for swearing that ever she heard in all her life," and she further declared that he was "able to spoil all the youth in a whole town, if they but came into his company."

Bunyan later wrote, "I wished with all my heart that I might be a little child again, that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it that it is vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought it never could be. I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before and another behind, to make my words have authority."

But the Lord so cleaned up his English language that he wrote the greatest English classic—and the most printed book outside the Bible—ever written: Pilgrim's Progress. (Robert Morgan, Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations & Quotes)