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by David Wilkerson October 26, 2011

“But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8).

In this verse from his epistle, James is talking about the tongue of a believer. He is issuing a call to the church to gain control of their tongues—before they are destroyed by them! You may ask: How serious is this matter of taming the tongue? Can an “unruly tongue” really be that sinful?

A loose tongue renders our religion absolutely worthless! It can make your every spiritual activity totally useless in God’s eyes: “If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless” (James 1:26).

James’ reference here to those “among you” means people in the church. Not drug addicts or street people but those members of the body of Christ who appear pious, spiritual. They are active in the work of the Lord, but their tongues are unbridled, out of control! James is zeroing in on those who seem to be holy, kind, gentle and loving, yet who move about the church or their job or their family with acid tongues, always telling tidbits of gossip or listening with a willing ear. They murmur and complain and God says their religion—all their show of spirituality—is in vain, worthless!

Beloved, I do not want to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and discover that all my work for the Lord—my entire spiritual endeavor—has been in vain! I do not want to hear Him say, “David, you did mighty works in My name. You fed the hungry, clothed the naked, cast out devils, and established drug rehabilitation centers and homes for alcoholics. Yes, you preached to countless thousands and won many to the kingdom. But it was all for nothing! Many uplifting words came out of your mouth but there were also bitter, unkind, hateful, envious words! You took My warnings on this matter of the tongue too lightly!”

You may speculate, “Surely God isn’t so unloving that He would discount my spirituality because I said something uncharitable!” I am speaking here of Christians whose tongues have never been tamed, who speak against God’s people without blinking an eye! Here is what God’s Word says: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)