

BACK TO SCHOOL

About Language

Introduction:

1. This series will focus on issues that we tend to think of as those facing the younger generation.
2. However, these matters concern all men – young and old, children and adults.
3. Sometimes, in our spiritual lives, we need to go back to school and reflect upon the teaching of Scripture.
4. Lesson 1 - Influence

I. The Power of Words

- A. *“Sticks and stones...”*
- B. Words have power for good.
 1. Encouragement (Deut. 1:25; Prov. 12:25; 16:24)
 2. Joy (Prov. 15:23; 25:11)
 3. Truth (Matthew 13:23)
- C. Words have power for evil.
 1. Discouragement (Deut. 1:28)
 2. Hurt
 3. Error (Romans 16:18)
- D. We will be judged by our words (Matthew 12:36-37).

II. Profanity, Vulgarity and Cursing

- A. It is important to understand the meaning of the word “profanity.”
 1. In its simplest form, it means “unholy, common, public.”
 2. It refers to something that is “of men” rather than “of God.”
 3. It was used of the area around the Temple where anyone could walk (in contrast to the areas where only the priests could go).
 4. To profane is to take something holy and make it common.
 5. We can profane ourselves (1 Peter 2:9; Leviticus 21).
 6. Men could profane the Sabbath (Ezekiel 22:8, 26).
- B. We must be careful not to profane the name of God (Lev. 18:21; 19:12).
 1. Take the Lord’s name in vain (Exodus 20:7; Matthew 5:33)
 2. Use it in any way that is empty of meaning
- C. Cursing means, “to make light of something serious, to show no respect, evil or wicked talk.”
 1. No rotten words (Ephesians 4:29)
 2. No filthiness (Ephesians 5:4) – *obscenity*
 3. No vile communication (Colossians 3:8)
- D. Remember the danger of euphemisms.
- E. Do not begin a bad habit that is very difficult to break.
- F. Remember the importance of influence.

III. Gossip, Slander and Backbiting

- A. Gossip is talk about another person that is intended to turn one’s opinion against that individual.
 1. Tattler (1 Timothy 5:13) – *a person who utters silly, foolish things*

- a. The word means “to boil up, to produce bubbles.”
 - b. Thus, it is talk that is like bubbles – hollow and empty.
 2. Prating (3 John 10) – *to make empty charges, idle accusations*
 - a. From the same root as “tattler”
 - b. “To accuse one falsely with malicious words”
 - c. “To bring unjustified charges against, malicious gossip, unfounded rumors”
 3. Busybody (2 Thessalonians 3:11) – *one who meddles in the affairs of others*
 - a. “To busy one’s self about trifling, needless, useless matters”
 - b. Usually, to the neglect of one’s own business
 4. Meddler (1 Peter 4:15) – *one who seeks to supervise the business of others*
- B. Slander is gossip intended to harm or destroy another person’s character or reputation.
1. Whisperer (Rom. 1:29; 2 Cor. 12:20) – *secret slander; speaking evil of one who is not present*
 2. Backbiter (Romans 1:30) – *one who speaks against or defames another, evil speaker*
 3. Talebearer (Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 26:20) – *a scandal monger, one who traffics scandalous reports of others*
 4. False Accuser (2 Timothy 3:3) – *one prone to slander, specifically Satan (Gr. Diabolos)*
- C. How do I know if it is gossip?
1. Will it help or hurt someone’s reputation by repeating this information?
 2. Is the information true, or is it merely rumor or speculation?
 3. Would it be better left untold, even if it is true?
 4. Will any be edified or encouraged if this information is repeated?
 5. What is my motive?
 6. Is it about something that has been repented of?
 7. Will it cause those who hear me to sin?
- D. We must use our words to speak Truth to the salvation of souls – not slander to the destruction of lives.

Conclusion:

1. How are you using the power of words?
2. Why not use them to build up and encourage?
3. Why not use them to teach the Gospel?
4. Why not use them to respond to our Lord’s invitation?