

233).

Every person should take great thought before saying unfavorable things of others.

2. Lies. The author of all lies is Satan (John 8:44). He uttered the first lie to Eve when he said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).

There are few negative parts recorded by inspiration of the life of Abraham, but on two occasions, Abram lied about Sarah, his wife, calling Sarah, his sister unto Pharaoh (Gen. 12:13) and Abimelech (Gen. 20:2). Yet someone argues, "Abraham told the truth; for Sarah was his half-sister." But deception was the intent of Satan's lie to Eve and likewise, Abram's intent was to deceive the leaders of those

countries for fear of his own life; therefore, showing a lack of faith in God Almighty who promised to lead, guide, and protect Abram and his household.

Another example of lying is found in Acts 5:1-11 in the earlier days of the church. Two children of God, Ananias and Sapphira, attempted to deceive their brethren and the apostles by saying that they sold a certain possession and gave the whole amount to God. But the truth is that this couple kept a part of the price and lied in order to appear better than they actually were. Their intention was to deceive. As a result of their sin, their lives were taken by God, bringing fear upon all the church and those that heard.

Lying and the telling of falsehoods is one of the gravest sins of the tongue. James describes the tongue as "a fire, a world of iniquity" (Jam. 3:6) and how accurate this is; for, one usually has to tell more and more lies to cover the ones which already have been told. Finally, the Bible says that the destination of all liars is "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

One may work with his hands, worship with his heart, yet allow a loose tongue to close the doors of heaven. Every Christian should exercise patience and temperance in guarding his tongue. When this is accomplished, then the Christian will develop the type of character that God will save. ~

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"People Don't Want a Friendly Church..."

As you read the title you were probably questioning it. Is it true people don't want a friendly church? If they don't want a friendly church, why are we always talking about being friendly? If they don't want a friendly church, what DO they want?



I don't remember where I heard the quote but I believe it is true: "People don't want a friendly church. They want a friend."

What does this mean? Do people not want a friendly church? Yes, they do, but that is only the beginning — what they are really looking for is a friend. If you are looking for a friend you usually begin with someone who is friendly, not someone who ignores you or is rude to you.

But the fact that someone is friendly doesn't necessarily mean they will be your friend. Being friendly doesn't require the sustained effort that being a friend does. It is one thing to be friendly for the 4-5 hours a

week that we spend together "at church." It is quite another to be a friend at not only those times, but at other times during the week. "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24) Friends spend time together — that's what builds their friendship. They may work together, they will certainly worship together, and they may

go out to eat, have a picnic, put on a fish fry, play games, or just sit and talk.

Being a friend requires much more than the investment of time — it will require you to listen, to share, and even to open yourself up to another. There is an emotional commitment — to share the good times, the bad times, even to correct them when you must. "As the iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend." (Prov. 27:17) You will probably have to laugh at some of the same jokes over and over (just like they do yours), you will have to not only vent to them, but really listen when they vent to you. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born to adversity." (Prov. 17:17)

The quote is right — what people really want is a friend, or friends. Are you willing to make the commitment to be a friend to a new Christian, or a new member or family in the congregation? They will benefit, but so will you. - by Tol Burke

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Place
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“Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes”



Driving in Puerto Rico is a real experience. The traffic is heavy and there aren't enough roads for all of us which leads some people to do some crazy things. Most traffic lights, for example, have left turn lanes with an arrow. But if the line is too long in that lane, someone will pull into the adjoining lane and turn left from that one--in front of those in the real turn lane if they can. They will even occasionally U-turn from this lane in front of you. If you are foolish enough to stop at a red light when there is no traffic you will either get honked at or more likely, they will just go around you and run the light.

On Fridays and Saturdays the traffic will frequently back up so that people will block the entrance/exit of our subdivision. Of course when we get our short light we cannot move, but don't worry that just means we move

as soon as we can, thus cutting into the light of the people across from us, so they run their red light, thus cutting short those turning left into the neighborhood, which blocks those going on the highway--I think you get the picture. I'm learning how to position myself in a left turn lane, etc. so that I effectively block as many as possible so they HAVE to let me go. Otherwise, I could sit there a good while.

What is really amusing (and dangerous) is to see semi trucks switching lanes, riding peoples bumpers, etc. as if they were a small car. I think it must be so ingrained in people they don't even realize that they are doing it. Our backyard is bordered by a creek, which is bordered by a 6 lane road. Hardly a week goes by that we don't hear a wreck from our yard and we see at least one a week.

You probably are wondering what all my ranting has to do with the title--a quote from the book of Judges. Everything!! Judges recounts what happened in Israel when there was no king--no leadership, "every man did what was right in his own eyes". Some examples of the results are recorded in the last 3-4 chapters, one of which almost lead to the extermination of the tribe of Benjamin.

In Puerto Rican traffic there is no law (it exists, but a law that is not enforced ceases to be a law) so every man does what he wants to do. The result is total chaos. It is no different in society at large--when a society rejects authority eventually it will deteriorate into chaos. Western society is a good example of this today. When no one tries to enforce right and wrong chaos will always result.

It is no different in the church either. When brethren reject authority not only chaos but division will follow. 1 Cor. 11 says as much: "there must be division among you that those who are approved may be made manifest." Some will stand for the truth when others leave it, so there will be division and every evil work.

What is your attitude toward authority? If God and His Word are not paramount in your life, you are at least sowing the seeds of chaos for your children, if not yourself. ~ Tol Burk

The Christian and the Tongue

Ronnie Whittemore

In his "sermon on the mount" Jesus describes his faithful followers as the "salt of the earth" and as shining lights (Matt. 5:13-16). The Christian can and should influence others to "deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow" Jesus (Matt. 16:24). A life of firm convictions, constant duty, and godly living will point the way of righteousness to others. Working hands, ready feet, and a compassionate heart also will aid in one's influence toward others. But perhaps there is one member of the human body which yields more influence than any other, and that is, the tongue.

This small, but powerful instrument, when used improperly, destroys and devours. When used as a device of Satan, it often causes irreparable damage. However, this same organ, when properly controlled, becomes a great weapon for truth. One cannot be a faithful doer of God's word without controlling his organ of speech. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (Jam. 1:26). It is quite evident from this passage that an enormous amount of good can be lost due to an uncontrollable tongue. Those things, which proceed out of the mouth, will be judged in the last day (Matt. 12:35-37). So great responsibility rests with

every individual for not only his thoughts and deeds, but his speech as well.

1. **Gossip.** This device of the devil is completely opposite to the attitude of love and concern for others (Matt. 5:43; 18:15-20). The fearless apostle Paul wrote, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

The harm of malicious gossip cannot be measured. The wise man Solomon, recorded, "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Prov. 26:22). Before hearing or spreading rumors or gossip, one should answer some basic, yet important questions.

Is it true? Will it do any good to hear or tell it? Would I want the person or persons involved to overhear what I say to others?

"Someone has described gossip in these words: 'I am more deadly than the screaming shell from the howitzer; I break hearts and wreck lives. I have no respect for truth or justice, no mercy for the defenseless. You will find me in the pews of the pious and the haunts of the unholy. I am wily, cunning, malicious, and I gather strength with age. I make my way where greed, mistrust, and dishonor are unknown. I feed on good and bad alike. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea and often as innocent. I never forgive and seldom forget. My name is gossip' (Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary, Nov. 2, 1958, p.

