

# Sins of the Tongue

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“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” (James 3:2). There are different ways in which man stumbles or sins. However, James says that it would take a perfect man to be able to keep from sinning with his tongue. Many are the sins of the tongue. Let us notice some of the more common ones below.

**1. Lying.** Lying is deliberately telling something that is not true. Contrary to what some believe, it is never right to tell a lie. The Bible condemns lying. “Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25). All liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8).

**2. Gossip.** Gossip is idle talk about others. Even if this talk is the truth, it still does not need to be said because of the damage that it can do. The apostle Paul condemned those who practiced such: “And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not” (1 Timothy 5:13).

**3. Filthy Language.** This sin of the tongue is all too common in our society today. Language that used to get a kid’s mouth washed out with soap can now win him a Grammy if he can make it rhyme and put it to music. Much of our entertainment (movies, TV, music, magazines, etc.) is full of filthy language today, and it has had a negative effect on our society. The apostle Paul said that such language is not fitting for those who identify themselves to be Christians. “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth” (Colossians 3:8). “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth” (Ephesians 4:29).

**4. Using God’s Name in Vain.** God has condemned the vain use of His name. “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7). “And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death” (Leviticus 24:16). Some people think nothing of using the names of “God” and “Jesus” to express their emotions and thoughts to others, but such use is a sin.

**5. Complaining.** Not many people would put complaining in the same category as lying, gossip, filthy language, and blasphemy, but it is. The Bible tells of a time that God destroyed His own people simply because they kept complaining. Paul reminded the Corinthians of this time, then warned them not to complain, “as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer” (1 Corinthians 10:10). Some people who would never be heard lying, gossiping, or using filthy language think nothing of complaining. Maybe they should think again. “Do all things without complaining and disputing” (Philippians 2:14).

We need to take our Lord’s warning very seriously: “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36).