

The Right Words at the Right Time

Benjamin Franklin is attributed to having said the following: "Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment." Who among us has not wrestled with the proper use of the tongue? James says that "no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison" (Jas. 3:8). Surrendering to the power of the tongue is not the solution. Any person who thinks himself to be religious must get a handle on his tongue. Otherwise, his religion is worthless (Jas. 1:26).

Though one of life's great challenges, we must strive to use the gift of speech in a way that glorifies God. Solomon poetically describes the beauty of right speech in these familiar words: "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances" (Prov. 25:11). But there is also the potential for tremendous harm. Speech can be a two-edged sword. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21).

James pointed out inconsistencies in speech, saying that with our tongue "we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing." Then, he adds, "My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (Jas. 3:9-10). *Continued on the next page.....*

