

## ***Praying “In Jesus’ Name”***

I AM AN ADVOCATE FOR PRAYING IN THE NAME OF JESUS for this is what the Scripture teaches us to do. Jesus said, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (Jn. 14:14). In the preceding verse, Jesus explained why asking in His name is so vital. “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn. 14:13). To Jesus, asking in His name meant that His Father would be glorified rather than Himself. If Jesus felt this to be essential to glorifying God, we must not question it— even if it is hard for us to understand exactly why He feels this way. It should be enough for us to do exactly what Jesus asks us to do.

Occasionally we are hearing prayers addressed to Jesus rather than through Him. I neither question the sincerity of those who pray in such a manner, nor do I question their motivation. They feel they glorify Christ by doing so. But when Jesus prayed, to whom did He pray? There is not a single reference to Him praying to Himself, even though He is deity, fully the Son of God. Jesus prayed to His Father and teaches His disciples to do so. This is prayer addressed to God the Father, which is unquestionably the right thing to do. But just what is involved in praying “in Jesus’ name”?

There is certainly a difference between doing something in Jesus’ name and simply saying “in Jesus’ name” when you do it. “In Jesus’ name” means “by the authority of Jesus.” There are some prayers which ended with the words “in Jesus’ name” which were NOT by His authority for those prayers asked for things not according to the Lord’s will. On the other hand, there have been prayers offered “in Jesus’ name” when those very words may not have been spoken verbatim. Sometimes a simple oversight occurs, or nervousness sets in, or the prayer is personal, silent and quick. Rather than a set liturgy of words, the prayer must be offered sincerely, yet according to the will of God. By doing so, one prays “in Jesus’ name.”

We are also commanded, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:17). Obviously, that does not mean that we go around constantly calling the name of Jesus over everything we may do. It does mean we do everything either as Jesus commanded, or as He showed us He would approve. As we pray, let’s pray “in Jesus’ name.” In our culture this is objectionable to many. This fact alone may underscore all the more the need for us to use His name in prayer.

*- by Mark W. White*

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## ***Gossip: Easy, Enjoyable Sinning***

"Did you hear the one about? . . ." Thus begins the stand-up comic into his humorous routine. Too often our own conversations begin the same way. But the end result is not nearly so funny. In the process we have gossiped about our brethren, our neighbors, perhaps our co-workers, maybe even our own family. Gossip, defined as idle talk about the affairs of others, is a genuine problem for God's people. Think about gossip. . .

**IT IS EASY:** You won't have to work hard to become an accomplished gossip. No, in fact, the practice is rather like catching the common cold. It takes very little planning, intention, or effort -- it just seems to happen.

The ease with which we may be affected by this spiritual malady is the basis of a clear warning: "A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much" (Proverbs 20: 18). Association with the gossip is a dangerous practice. The first threat is that he may reveal some secret of ours. But also, our company with him can influence us to join in his sinful practice (1 Cor. 15:33). His disease is contagious. Beware!

We are all susceptible. In Romans chapter one, Paul wrote of the heathens who had chosen to ignore God. They had engaged in gratifying every carnal desire. Among their faults was the sin of being "whisperers" (vs. 28). Other versions translate this as "gossips". What we see here is that men, when following the desires of the flesh rather than the will of God, will be prone to gossip.

**IT IS ENJOYABLE:** The ease with which folks can be made to gossip must surely be connected with the perverted kind of enjoyment it brings to those who participate in it. There is a strange sense of reward that comes from being the first to know -- and tell -- something on another

person. Some people get such a charge out of this that they are not above manufacturing some tale. It may not be a complete fabrication. There may be shreds of truth blended together with lots of imagination -- anything to arrive at a good 'juicy' bit of gossip. This, most assuredly, is a sin that brings "pleasure for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

Christians of the first century, like us all, demonstrated a propensity for this activity. Paul was concerned that he would find "whisperings" (translated "gossip" in the NIV) when he returned to Corinth (2 Corinthians 12:20). James bemoaned certain sins of the tongue that "ought not so to be" (James 3:10). Self control in such matters is, he said, the ultimate sign of spiritual maturity: "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (vs. 3).

This is, we have learned, the kind of thing that everyone can 'enjoy'. It is truly everyone's malady. We all like to be 'in the know', and we love for people to know that we know! So, we gossip; we betray confidences; we spread rumors.

**IT IS SIN:** Here is the bottom line! Jesus warned, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:36,37).

Remember the definition of gossip? It is "idle talk about the affairs of others", and it clearly falls within the realm of things that we will answer for in the judgment. In the Proverbs we are warned: "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (13:3). And again, "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles" (21: 23).

Recall that we've included this as one of the maladies that affects everyone. This is not just a problem of irreligious folk. A lot of regular 'church-goers' have the problem, too. Of these James says: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

**THERE IS A CURE:** Take heart! There is a solution for the sin of gossiping. We are promised forgiveness of this sin, just like any other sin, as we comply with the conditions of God's will. And furthermore, we have the confidence that our Father will help us withstand future temptations to commit this common sin. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Our task is to look for that "way to escape", and to avoid this terrible sin of gossip.

"Did you hear the one about? . . ." No! And please don't tell me!

**- by Greg Gwin**