

"They couldn't hit an elephant at this dist . . ."

These were the last words spoken by General John Sedgwick as he surveyed the enemy troops during the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse. In mid-word, a Rebel bullet found its mark and so ended a great military career. The general's statue stands today near the parade grounds at West Point, an enduring testimonial to Confederate marksmanship!

Stories like this should remind us just how silly - and dangerous - our words can be. Speech reveals what's in our hearts. Sedgwick's comments evinced great confidence in the safety and security of his troops, when in reality, he was merely seconds from the Grim Reaper.

Our own words are no less revealing. Whether statements are casual, careless, or deliberate, our choice of terms and voice inflection belie what might otherwise remain hidden.

Consider some of our "stupid" words:

"I was just too busy to do my Bible lesson." In truth we're too wedded to the world to divorce ourselves from carnal concerns long enough to cultivate spiritual growth.

"It's the church's job to teach my children the Bible." Then what, pray tell, is your job, Dad?

"I don't know why the preacher can't quit on time?" Perhaps it's because there is so much you need to hear.

"The Bible doesn't say I have to go to church on Sunday night." The Bible doesn't say you have to go to heaven either, but why would you want to miss it?

- by Steve Dewhurst

Dealing with Sin

When confronted with the reality of your own sinfulness, you can:

JUSTIFY YOURSELF - like Adam did (Gen. 3:12)

COVER IT UP - like David initially did (2 Samuel 11,12)

DENY IT - like Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-26)

or you can:

CONFESS IT - like the prodigal (Lk. 15:17-19)

REPENT OF IT - like Ninevah (Jonah 3:10)

FORSAKE IT - like Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8)

WASH IT AWAY - like Paul (Acts 22:16)

- by Jim Martin

What Needs Changing?

When you look into the mirror and your face appears dirty, it is your face, not the mirror that needs attention. The Bible is the mirror of the soul. It reveals our imperfections and shows us how to make corrections. However, some try to rework the Bible instead of reshaping their lives. Don't make that mistake. When you look into the "*perfect law of liberty*", continue in it. Don't be a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work (James 1:25). Don't try to change the word; let the word change your life.

- by Lloyd Atherton

Feelings and Facts

We are hearing more and more that "your truth" may be different from "my truth." Modern psychology often promotes the idea that a person's feelings determine reality for them. If you feel something strongly enough, then it is supposedly "true" for you. But that is not the way God describes truth in His word.

Feelings are real, and God created us with emotions. They have an important place in our lives. The problem comes when we allow feelings to determine what is right and wrong.

The Bible repeatedly warns that our feelings can mislead us. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Something can feel right and still be completely wrong.

Saul of Tarsus is a good example. Before becoming a Christian, he was convinced that he was serving God by persecuting believers. Later he admitted, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). He was sincere, but he was sincerely wrong.

That's why the wise man said, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). Our feelings, preferences, and opinions are not the standard. God's word is.

Jesus said, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Truth is not determined by emotions, popular opinion, or changing social trends. It remains what God says it is.

Sadly, many reject plain Bible teaching because it doesn't match what they feel. Some claim salvation based on feelings alone. Others defend sinful behavior because it "feels right" to them. But feelings cannot change God's will. Sin is still sin, even when the world celebrates it (Isaiah 5:20).

The question is not, "How do I feel about it?" The question is, "What does God say?" Our responsibility is not to redefine truth, but to conform ourselves to it.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

- by Greg Gwin