

## ***Your Speech Betrayeth You***

When the Savior stood before Caiaphas, the High Priest, Peter waited outside the palace. When a young woman approached him and said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee," he denied it. Another came with the same observation and he denied it with an oath. Then others that stood by said to Peter, "Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee," and he began to curse and swear, saying he did not know Jesus (Mat 26:69ff).

Peter's identity was confirmed by the way he spoke. Because of the way he pronounced his words -- by his accent--those he was with knew he was from Galilee.

By our speech today, people can tell a lot about us, not just in a physical sense, but spiritually as well. Our speech can betray us. We may tell people we are Christians and citizens of God's kingdom, but our words will let them know where we are really from. We can be identified by our:

**FILTHY SPEAKING:** Christians are urged to put away, among other things, "filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col 3:8). A filthy mouth reveals a filthy mind, "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mat 12:34). We may claim to be Christians, but if we tell dirty jokes and if we constantly use obscene "bathroom" words, our speech betrays us and our true identity is made known. The true Christian will think on things that are pure (Phi 4:8) and season his speech with salt (Col 4:6).

**LYING:** If we say we are Christians and do not always tell the truth, our speech betrays us. A lying tongue is an abomination in God's sight (Pro 6:16-19). We cannot say we are of Christ if we tell lies, for the devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn 8: 44). "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Eph 4:25). A child of God is to so speak and so do that he can be relied upon in every way.

**MURMURINGS AND COMPLAININGS:** Paul admonishes us not to murmur as did the Children of Israel when they wandered in the wilderness (I Cor 10:10). A Christian should rejoice in his relationship with his Heavenly Father. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phi 4:4). The complainer lets everyone know his true identity.

**BOASTING:** "So the tongue also is a little member and boasteth great things (Jas 3:5). Bragging is contrary to Christianity and James says it is evil; but it is especially sad for one who claims to be a Christian to boast of the evil he does. When a young man brags about his illicit conquests, or a young woman shamelessly tells about going to night clubs and getting drunk, the cause of Christ is dealt a critical blow. "But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (Jas 4:16).

**USING THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN:** "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex 20:7). There are many things worthy of honor and respect. We honor the name of our parents and resent anyone's speaking of them disrespectfully. We respect the flag and are filled with indignation when men regard it lightly. How much more should we regard the name of the Lord our God with reverence and awe. One who uses it in any disrespectful and irreverent way, identifies himself as one who does not honor his Heavenly Father.

**EMPTY, WORTHLESS RELIGION:** "If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (Jas 1:26).

**-by Paul Stringer**

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## ***Church Recreation***

Recently I received an invitation to a facility that provided "ping pong, walking track, concerts, basketball, weights, pool table, board games, banquets, refreshments, etc." No, the invitation did not come from the local YMCA. It came from a local church.

Increasingly churches have begun to take on the atmosphere of social clubs; some do rival local health spas. Yet, I do NOT read in the Bible where "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16: 16), in their life and death struggle to preach the gospel to a lost world, ever made such social/recreational provisions for that world (or themselves). According to the New Testament (NT) the ONLY work God ordained the local church to do consists of: preaching the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8), assembling for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25), and meeting the physical needs of destitute Christians (Acts 4:34-35; 6:1ff). The work of the local church was spiritual, NOT recreational.

And it certainly was not for lack of public interest that kept churches in the Bible out of athletics and entertainment. The world into which the gospel was first preached LOVED the sports arena. Their children played five different games of ball and the Roman emperors were masters at building public baths, theaters, stadiums and using them to 'politic' the people. The world back then had their superstar athletes, actors and actresses too. In fact, it is safe to say that America's enjoyment and pursuit of recreation/entertainment is equal to the people of NT times. But again, the NT is SILENT about local churches making ANY provision for the fulfillment of such interests. And get this! The hope of the gospel was still "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 1:23). Churches in the NT understood that the world needed the gospel and its eternal benefits, not temporary distractions.

We still believe the gospel is God's power to motivate all men to faith, obedience and salvation (Romans 1:16).

**- by Keith Camp**

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### **'Justification' For Drinking?**

A study by Harvard researchers tracked 38,000 men, aged 40 to 75, for 12 years. The results revealed that "those who drank alcohol had 35 to 40 percent fewer heart attacks" and that "the best results came from drinking almost every day." The study was published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

We are certain that there will be some folks, even some of our brethren, who will quickly latch onto this study and use its results as a further argument to "justify" the practice of "moderate, social drinking." This is anticipated, unfortunately, because there have always been some who desperately want to prove that drinking - at least moderate drinking - is "OK." Their arguments are flawed, and their conclusions are wrong.

For sake of argument, let's say that the new Harvard study is correct. Never mind that such studies are routinely discredited by the next "research" that comes down the pike. Also disregard the obvious and awful consequences of 'problem drinking' that wreck the lives of millions of people every year. Even if we ignore these things, the argument still fails to "justify" the practice. Consider this parallel example:

Imagine that a "new study" finds that the adrenaline rush that comes from robbing banks is beneficial to one's health. It invigorates the nerves, expands cardiovascular function, and stimulates one's immune system - it may even provide a cure for AIDS (why not!?!). Now, if such research was true (obviously it's not!), would one be "justified" to go out and rob a bank? Certainly not! Any health benefit, real or imagined, would not offset the plain condemnation of stealing found in the word of God (Ephesians 4:28).

Now, here's the point: God's Word clearly and absolutely condemns drunkenness AND so-called "moderate" or "social" drinking (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 4:3). Questionable "studies" about health benefits notwithstanding, it is still a sin to drink alcohol. Think!

**- by Greg Gwin**