



# The Voice of Truth



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## The Power of the Tongue

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The Bible teaches "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (**Prov. 18:21**). "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (**Prov. 13:3**). The tongue is capable of great good. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life... and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (**Prov. 15:4,23**). It is also capable of great harm. Therefore David resolved. "...I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked ts before me" (**Psa. 39:1**). The tongue is powerful to destroy as to edify; the poison, or antidote, depending on how it is used. A thoughtful and kind tongue can encourage the weak and exhort the wayward; it can give life! A foolish tongue can destroy personalities and reputations; it can kill! Every one of us carries this powerful instrument every day!

In **James, chapter 3**, there is a general warning to all Christians about the need for controlling the tongue. Let us look at some improper uses of the tongue.

**1). Profanity** is certainly the exercise of an uncontrolled tongue. The name of God is sacred and is never to be used with irreverence or disrespect. (**Psa. 111:9**). Yet, most Christians use a number of euphemisms which profane the name of God. Surely this is done out of ignorance and not out of a conscious desire to take the name of God in vain. The words "gosh" and "golly" are euphemisms for the name of God. "Gee" or "gee whiz" are euphemisms for the name of Jesus. **Webster's Third New International Dictionary** so defines these words. The child of God must take care to keep his tongue free from all profanity.

**2). Hypocrisy** with ones tongue is also a woeful danger facing Christians. One may sing "Take time to be holy" and then never

read his Bible or pray. One may sing "More about Jesus" and then forsake the services of the church. This is hypocrisy in that an individual professes one thing and practices another.

Let us now consider some commendable uses of the tongue:

**1).** The Christian should use his tongue for **Prayer**. Paul exhorts Christians to "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thess. 5:17**). Pray for the people who need salvation. Pray for the weak and wayward brethren. Pray for the sick.

**2).** The Christian should use his tongue for **Praise and Thanksgiving** (**Heb. 13:15; Jam. 1:17**). Every good gift is from God and he is to be praised and thanked for his goodness.

**3).** The Christian should use his tongue to **Teach the Gospel** to the lost. It is the responsibility of every Christian to teach people to believe and obey the gospel of Christ. We must try to restore the erring brethren. If a child of God really believes the gospel is able to save men from the terrors of eternal hell and secure them a heavenly inheritance, he will be searching constantly for opportunities to teach it!

*"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" (**Jam. 1:26**). "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (**Prov. 18:21**). ♦*

## The Infinite Value of Mercy

By Jonathan L. Perz

In our Lord's great Sermon on the Mount, the fifth beatitude says, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*" (**Matt. 5:7**). What is mercy? Why is mercy of such great value in the Christian life?

Mercy is defined as "1. *compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy or other person in one's power; compassion, pity or benevolence* 2. *the disposition to be merciful* 3. *the discretionary power of a judge to pardon or to mitigate punishment* 4. *an act of kindness, compassion or favor.*" (Random House Collegiate Dictionary, p. 836).

In the Christian life, these definitions carry greater significance because such great mercy has been shown to us. The Bible reminds us, "*Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful*" (**Luke 6:36**).

Do we understand how to demonstrate mercy? Do we realize the great and incomparable value of mercy?

Overlooking a personal transgression shows mercy (**Prov. 19:11**). This is not simply making a show of your mercy (i.e., making sure everyone knows how merciful you are). It is to truly overlook the transgression—i.e., not mention it, not bring it up, not let it affect your relationship with the transgressor. The value of such true mercy is seen in the reward. For example, those who feel the need to rake every person who crosses them over the coals have their reward (shattered and torn friendships, broken relationships, distrust, anger, etc.). Whereas, those who choose to show mercy will thereby obtain mercy when they need it most. Mark these words, every single one of us will find ourselves in need of mercy (**Heb. 4:16**)!

Likewise, doing good for those who wrong you is an act of mercy (**Rom. 12:17-21**). It is easy to do good to those who do good to you. Even the carnal man understands this. What sets a spiritual man (i.e., merciful man) apart

is his ability to do right in the face of a wrong (**Luke 6:32-25**). The motive is not to see them suffer in the flames of your "niceness." The motive is to overcome evil with good. If mercy cannot be practiced with cheerfulness, it is not really mercy (**cf. Rom. 12:8**). The obvious side effect is that they will feel the shame of their own wicked behavior because of your good example. Such behavior has even led souls to Christ. Indeed, I can imagine no benefit of greater value!

Making judgments regarding circumstances and situations in our life requires mercy (**Jas. 2:13**). Sometimes these judgments involve our fellow man directly. Giving the benefit of the doubt (though they don't deserve it) is a way of showing mercy, whereas thinking the worst of someone (though they might deserve it) can be unmerciful. Which would you rather receive when you are in the hot seat? Mercy will shine brightest when the outcome seems darkest!

At this point, a word of caution is in order. One must be careful to consider the delicate balance between showing mercy and enabling someone to sin. We must always be careful not to be more merciful than God (think about it)!

Of course, no article on mercy would be complete without the example of one being merciful to those who can't help themselves (i.e., the Good Samaritan — **Luke 10:29-37**). Ask yourself, was the Good Samaritan's mercy done for reward or did it cost him something? Did the good Samaritan have to think about what was in it for him? The Good Samaritan did what he did because it was the right thing to do! The fact of the matter is, the truest and greatest acts of mercy come with the greatest cost, and are often done without thought of reward!

I believe the wise man summed the value of mercy best when he wrote, "*The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh*" (**Prov. 11:17**). May we all come to understand the infinite value of mercy! Credit: [www.moodychurchofchrist.com](http://www.moodychurchofchrist.com) ♦

## Glorifying God

By Gene Taylor

Glorify means "to ascribe glory to; adore. To elevate in honor: reflect glory upon." The purpose of all created beings, especially those who are His children, is to glorify God because He is worthy of all glory, honor and power (**Rev. 4:11**).

**Ephesians 3:21** says that the church, in all generations, should glorify Him. The obvious question to ask is, "How?" "How can the church glorify God?" This article will attempt to suggest some ways in which the church can bring glory to God.

Since the church is people, the body of the saved (**Acts 2:47**), it is those people who must bring glory to God. So, in reality, the church can only glorify God by those individuals who comprise it. In what ways, then, can we as individuals who are members of the church glorify God?

### By Our Purity Of Life

Christians are admonished to be pure in order to glorify God. *"Flee sexual immorality ... or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"* (**1 Cor. 6:18-20**). To remain pure, Christians are commanded to think on pure things (**Phil. 4:8**); not share in the sins of others (**1 Tim. 5:22**); be examples in purity (**1 Tim. 4:12**); cleanse their hands and purify their hearts (**Jas. 4:8**); and keep unspotted from the world (**Jas. 1:27**). Such purity is necessary in order to be with Christ (**1 John 3:3**), see God (**Matt. 5:8**), and glorify God (**1 Cor. 6:20**).

### With Our Possessions

Those who comprised the church in Macedonia were prompted to glorify God because of the liberality of the Christians in the city of Corinth (**2 Cor. 9:13**). When one uses the resources he possesses to further the

cause of Christ, God is glorified. **Matthew 5:16** states, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

The Scriptures plainly teach what the Christian's attitude toward material possessions should be. He is to seek first the kingdom of God (**Matt. 6:19-33**). He must realize that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (**1 Tim. 6:10**). Those who are rich are to be neither haughty nor trust in riches but should rather be rich in good works, ready to give and willing to share (**1 Tim. 6:17-19**).

Wealth used in God's service is wealth correctly used. One is to give as he is prospered (**1 Cor. 16:1-2**), purposefully, neither grudgingly nor of necessity, but cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver (**2 Cor. 9:6-7**).

### By Our Perseverance

To persevere is to persist in any purpose or enterprise; to continue striving in spite of discouragements. As Peter wrote his first epistle, he knew its recipients would have to endure future trials and suffering. He was writing to them to encourage them to persevere in spite of the great adversity that was about to come upon them. In **1 Peter 4:16** he wrote, *"Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter."*

Christians glorify God in the church by persevering in:

**Unity.** The unity heaven desires is based on the word of God (**1 Cor. 1:10**). To preserve unity among brethren requires "diligence" (**Eph. 4:3**) because one must know the word of God and make continued application of it in all circumstances. But such effort is worthwhile because unity glorifies God (**Rom. 15:6**).

**Worship.** The purpose of worship is to glorify God. Acceptable worship is done in spirit and truth (**John 4:24**) thus honoring God with the proper attitudes of reverence for Him and respect for His word.

**Teaching His word.** One who is taught God's word learns of God, His might and majesty, and how He is to be honored (**2 Tim. 4:1-5**). His word reveals His power and tells how He is honored by obedience to His will in all things.

**The work of the Lord.** Doing the good works that God would have His children to do honors Him (**Matt. 5:13-16**). Therefore, Christians ought to always be "*abounding in the work of the Lord*" (**1 Cor. 15:58**) so that God is always being honored by their lives. Such causes others to glorify Him too (**1 Pet. 2:12**).

### Conclusion

If we expect to be with God in glory, then we must glorify Him while we live here on earth. Let us as individuals and as a collective body be doing everything we can to glorify God. *Credit: www.padfield.com* ♦

### "What My Absence Did"

Author Unknown

- It made some question the reality of religion.
- It made some think I was a pretender.
- It made some think that I regarded my spiritual welfare as a matter of small concern.
- It weakened the effect of our worship service.
- It made it harder for the preacher to deliver his message.
- It discouraged brethren, and thereby robbed them of a blessing.
- It caused others to stay away from church.
- It made it harder for me to meet the daily temptations of the devil.

• It gave the devil more power over lost souls.

### Watch For the Danger Signs

- When prayer is a burden and not a privilege,
- When Bible reading is dull and puts men to sleep,
- When the sermon is too long,
- When the preacher's sermon makes me angry,
- When I try to make excuses for my sins,
- When I feel I am being left out,
- When I don't feel like singing,
- When I am sick and want people to visit me... and yet, I seldom visit anyone, sick or well,
- When someone is restored back to God and I don't rejoice with them,
- When it bothers me to be called on to give more,
- When I get all I want and think I need in one hour a week at church,
- When these things happen, watch out for **SPIRITUAL DECAY!!!** ♦

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn** - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe** - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent** - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord** - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized** - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching** - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am  
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am  
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

[www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com](http://www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com)