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God. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Mat. 12:34-37).

We live in a society where most people use their tongues carelessly. Jesus, however, makes it very plain that we must be very careful concerning what we say and how we say it lest we stand condemned before God for our careless speech. He declared, "And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." (Mat. 12:34-37).

Profanity is one form of careless, sinful speech. Both persons and things can be profaned; for to profane something is to take that which is holy and put it to vile or common use. The moneychangers had profaned the Temple by using that holy place for common business (Mt. 21:12). We can use our speech to profane the name of the Lord-- a name that is to be held in honor and reverence (Ps. 111:9). "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). Something that is vain is simply that which is useless, futile, good for nothing. To use the Lord's name in vain is to use His name in a common way-- not speaking it to address Him, praise and worship Him, or teach about Him. Most people recognize that using the Lord's name to damn people or things is sinful. Yet, a common way in which many people use the Lord's name in vain is when they are surprised or excited about something-- the first thing coming out of their mouth being, "Oh, my God!" Most think nothing of this. However, it is a careless and profane way to speak of the Almighty God. "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to

the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:9).

Gossip too, is a careless and sinful use of the tongue. Gossip is conversation dealing personally with another's affairs, telling something uncomplimentary concerning someone else with the wrong attitude and purpose in mind. This is what the Scriptures condemn as slander, whispering, backbiting, and tattling (Pro. 11:13; 16:28; 26:20). In the list of those who fail to acknowledge God and submit to Him are "gossips" (Rom. 1:28-29). Jesus said "However you want people to treat you, so treat them" (Mat. 7:12). Put yourself in the situation of the one to be talked about and ask yourself honestly if you would want the same said about you. If not, then don't say it.

Another language problem many have is lying. How many people call in to work sick who are well? How many tell the one who answers the phone, "Tell them I'm not here"? We must be warned that concerning "...all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Note this passage says "all liars." That includes big lies and little lies, black lies and white lies— ALL lies!

Many who even claim to be religious are careless in their speech. Yet, James declares, "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless" (Jas. 1:26). We must be careful of what we say and how we say it to be pleasing to

