

THE
SINS

OF THE

MOUTH

CREFLO A. DOLLAR JR.

The Sins of the Mouth

**by
Creflo A. Dollar Jr.**

Editorial services provided by:
David Holland

Cover design by:
Personal Retouch
Marcus and Elizabeth Macon
188 Clydesdale Lane
Mableton, GA 30059
404 944-1223

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

ISBN: 1-885072-01-5

Copyright © 1994
Creflo A. Dollar Jr.
All Rights Reserved

Introduction

One of the most powerful weapons on the face of the earth is located approximately one inch below your nose. I'm referring to your mouth.

I'm convinced most Christians don't really understand how tremendously destructive their mouths can be. The implements of this destruction are rumors, gossip, backbiting and bad reports. You can destroy a person's life with words. Whole ministries can be reduced to nothing because of the mouth of one individual.

Tragically, this kind of thing is as prevalent in much of the Body of Christ today as it is in the world. This repeatedly warns us to carefully guard what comes forth from our mouths.

Set a watch, O LORD, before my

mouth; keep the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that... speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. (Psalm 15:1-3)

I believe with all my heart that eliminating sins of the mouth is a major key to seeing the glory of God manifested in our lives and in the church. In the next few pages, we're going to take a hard look at what God's Word has to say about the use of your mouth and discover some biblical principles that will enable you to make your mouth a source of blessing rather than cursing.

The Sins of the Mouth

The “Bad Report”

One of the most widespread sins of the mouth in the Church today is the “bad report.” What is a bad report? It is using words, a tone of voice or a facial expression to communicate something negative about another individual.

Yes, even a facial expression can deliver a bad report. When someone comes to you and asks, “What do you think about brother So-and-So?” and you respond by frowning and shaking your head, you’ve communicated more clearly than you could ever do with words.

Why is this so harmful? Because a bad report damages a person’s reputation with information that doesn’t need to be shared. It encourages the spread of discord and strife among others. It breeds every form of evil.

“But Pastor Dollar, what if it is my responsibility to communicate some negative information to the leadership in my church?”

There are times when a person’s responsibilities in the church call for him to bring negative information to a leader. However, it is still a bad report if you do not first go to the person involved with the purpose of restoring him or her in a scriptural way.

When you hear a rumor or bad report about a fellow believer, rather than passing it on, it is your responsibility to go to that person in love and deal with it. This is what I call the law of confrontation.

This means not sitting back in false humility saying, “I am not getting into that. I am going to stay holy and separate.” Such an attitude is not biblical.

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he

shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (Matthew 18:15)

Following the law of confrontation would eliminate 95% of all bad reports from the Body of Christ. It would also keep you from prejudging someone before you ever get a chance to know them.

For example, have you ever received a bad report about a certain individual and then later found it to be totally false once you got acquainted with them? How many times have we prejudged brothers and sisters in Christ simply because we accepted a bad report at face value?

That's why it is so important not to let anyone give you a bad report about another believer, especially when you've never had a chance to get to know that person for yourself.

I often find myself in that situation with other people in the ministry. Someone will approach me and say, "You know, I've heard Brother Smith is... etcetera, etcetera." I cut

them off and ask, “Have you gone to that brother with this? I would prefer not to hear it unless you’ve spoken with him about it and you want me to go back to him with you.” Ninety-nine times out of 100, that ends that.

Making Things Right

In the book of James, we’re told the tongue is a spark that can set devastating fires ablaze.

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (James 3:6)

When you give a bad report about someone, you’re setting such a fire. But it is possible to put that fire out before it has done too much damage. How do you do that? By repenting and asking that person for forgiveness.

The sooner you do this, the better. You

can be assured they will eventually find out what you said anyway. You might as well go ahead and make it right. In Luke 12:3 Jesus said:

“Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

When you speak negatively against a brother, God himself is grieved. It creates resistance in the spirit realm, resistance to you getting your prayers answered, resistance to your being blessed.

When you ask forgiveness of that person, fellowship with God is restored and the way is cleared to discuss the offense which prompted the bad report.

This is also true of the person about whom you spoke. When he or she hears what you said, they are going to be grieved. That person is going to put up walls of defense and

resistance against you and everyone you told. Their trust has been damaged.

God doesn't want that to happen in the Body of Christ because it creates division. Unity is the key to the manifestation of God's glory. When unity is under attack, the glory is under attack.

Even though you've asked God and the person you talked about to forgive you, you're still not through. You must also ask forgiveness of everyone to whom you delivered the bad report.

When you deliver a negative or damaging message about someone, God holds you responsible for how the people who heard you respond and act. That is why it is vital that you go to those you've corrupted with your evil communication and apologize. You should also encourage them to go to those they've told and do the same.

This stops them from repeating the negative information further and challenges

them to give only good reports in the future.

Simply getting convicted and apologizing to the person you've talked about isn't enough. By delivering a bad report you've set a fire. To truly make things right before God, you must do your best to put that fire out.

“Forgive Me”

When the Spirit of the Lord convicts you about spreading a bad report about a brother or sister in Christ, it is vital that you go to those you've poisoned with those words and ask them to forgive you.

“How?” you ask. Simply say, “God has convicted me about what I said the other day. I was wrong in spreading a bad report and have purposed to ask that person to forgive me. I'm asking you to forgive me, too.”

It's as simple as that. When you offer that kind of apology from a sincere and repentant heart, you nip a destructive progression in the bud.

That however, is the easy part. Asking forgiveness of the person you spoke about is more difficult. To do so effectively, you must search your heart and uncover the hidden attitudes that prompted you to spread the evil message in the first place. Often it is jealousy, resentment or pride. Whatever the underlying cause, it's important to confess it and get it out in the open.

One example would be: "Sister, I have been wrong in having a spirit of jealousy towards you. I know I have reflected that attitude in talking about you to others. I have asked them to forgive me and would be grateful if you would do the same."

That kind of message must be delivered in a spirit of true humility. Unfortunately, when many Christians finally get around to apologizing, they only do it halfway and halfheartedly. They'll say something like, "If I have done something to offend you, please forgive me."

Don't offer up a weak, false apology like

that. If you know you've done something wrong, own up to it and get it right.

An Abominable Offense

In the sixth chapter of Proverbs we find a verse that tells us just how serious God is about His people avoiding gossip and backbiting.

*These six things doth the LORD hate:
yea, seven are an abomination unto him:
A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands
that shed innocent blood, An heart that
deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be
swift in running to mischief, A false
witness that speaketh lies, and he that
soweth discord among brethren.
(Proverbs 6:16-19)*

All seven of these are attitudes or actions which damage other people. According to this scripture, God hates all of them but the seventh is set apart for special attention. Sowing discord among brethren, we're told, is an "abomination."

An abomination is a disgusting, detestable thing. That's how strongly God feels about anything that creates strife or division among His people. When you participate in gossip or spreading a bad report, you're sowing discord in the Body of Christ.

Child of God, you must be very watchful about what you repeat to others. How can you possibly expect to walk in blessings and power while participating in an activity that is an abomination to Almighty God?

This is a serious thing we're talking about here. There are Christians who have been removed from planet earth because they stubbornly continued to sow discord and strife in the Church. God was forced to withdraw His protective hand because they simply couldn't control their tongues.

An Antidote for Evil

“But Pastor Dollar, what should I do if someone asks me about something bad that I have knowledge of? Should I lie?”

Of course not. There is no need to lie simply to avoid passing on a bad report. One option is to remain silent. Let the old saying, “If you can’t say something good about someone, say nothing at all,” be your rule. But there is an even better course of action. We find it prescribed in Romans 12:21:

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

When someone comes to you looking for an evil report, simply overcome it by offering them a good one instead. Find something positive to say and let that be your report. Don’t fall into the old, “I just want to know what’s going on so I’ll know how to pray,” trap. It’s just an evil desire to hear gossip on someone else’s part. Don’t feed it. Overcome evil with good.

“Have You Heard...?”

Now you know how to deal with a person who asks you for a bad report. But what about

the person who comes to you wanting to deliver one? Do you know the best way to handle that situation to avoid involvement in what God calls an abomination?

There are a number of different ways to handle this situation. We've already made reference to one. Stop the messenger in mid-sentence and lovingly ask them if they've discussed this with the person they're talking about. If the answer is "yes," ask them if they are now discussing it with you because they want you to go with them to confront that person with the intent of restoring him or her.

Unless that is the sincere purpose of telling you about that negative situation, you have no business listening to it. Simply say, "I'm sorry, I can't in good conscience allow you to tell me anymore about that situation.

I've discovered another way to stop a gossip before they contaminate my soul with their poison. It's found in Proverbs 25:23.

The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

The next time someone comes up to you itching to tell you a juicy tidbit of gossip, give them your best scowl. They'll say, "What's wrong with you?" That's your opportunity to let them know you're not interested in hearing anything but a good report.

Most of us do just the opposite. When someone says, "Guess what I heard about her?" our ears perk up as we crane our necks in anticipation of hearing some good "dirt" on someone.

Don't be that way. Let the look on your face be a big "NOT WELCOME" sign for gossip and bad reports.

Approaching the Offender

From time to time you will find yourself in a situation in which you must deliver a bad report about someone else. It may be someone

who works under you and you are required to evaluate their performance on the job. It might be a person who works with you in a ministry of the church and the pastor asks your opinion of their activity.

When you must give a public statement about another person and you cannot truthfully give a good report, it is your responsibility to go to them in advance and privately attempt to restore them.

Before you do that, however, you must first thoroughly examine your own life. Remember Jesus' words about removing the beam in your own eye before you point out the speck in a brother's. (Matthew 7:3, 4)

What types of offenses should prompt you to go to another in this manner? That depends on the level of friendship or relationship you have with them.

Thoughtlessness is a common offense in a friendship. Laziness or incompetence can create problems in the workplace. In reality,

any number of actions can constitute an offense that calls for loving confrontation. You'll find a list of some of the more serious ones in I Corinthians 5:11.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

The Bible makes it very plain that these offenses should be confronted in the hope that the person will repent and start moving in another direction. It is equally clear that we are to have nothing to do with those who insist on living in rebellion to God and His Word.

Approaching an Elder

One of the most potentially awkward situations arises when you need to confront a person who is older or in spiritual authority over you.

As in all such circumstances, having the proper heart-attitude is of the utmost importance. God's Word gives us some valuable instruction in this area:

Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; (1 Timothy 5:1)

This verse gives us both the attitude and the method for properly confronting an older person. We must come with the heart of a servant. We must come, not on the basis of what is offending us, but rather on what is best for them.

I have used these guidelines successfully on many occasions. I will approach an older person and say something like this: "Sir, I know you have been involved in this area for many years. I'm learning a lot and still have much to learn. But may I respectfully point out something that you may not be seeing? It may be of help to you and help you better accomplish your goals."

When dealing with an older person, attitude is the key. If your attitude is wrong, it doesn't matter what words you use. Your attitude overrides your words.

Dealing with leadership is a little different.

The first thing you should do when you become convinced that your spiritual leadership is missing it, is pray. Pray long. Pray hard. The problem may very well be with you rather than your leader.

If the leader genuinely does have a problem, nothing will be as effective as prayer. If he is really a man of God, God can get His attention and move him in the right direction.

If the man is stiff-necked, rebellious and hardhearted, you probably don't have any business sitting under his ministry anyway. Don't sit under a person who is living his life in willful sin.

If after praying for an extended period of

time, you still feel you need to personally address the situation that is bothering you with your leader, do it with the same attitude with which you would approach an older person.

Assure your leader that you are committed to his vision for ministry and want to be of service in helping advance and achieve that vision. Your message is much more likely to be received if you can say that with honesty and sincerity.

Talking About Leadership

Not only is it vital to avoid sinning in the way you talk *to* leadership, it is also essential to do the right thing in talking about *your* spiritual leaders.

How many times have you had the opportunity to join someone in criticizing your pastor? It seems there is a never-ending supply of Christians who know much better than the man God has placed in leadership over a church how things ought to be run. These same people are always looking for

someone to agree with them and join them in their grumbling.

There are basically two ways to respond when given the opportunity to speak negatively about a leader. Suppose a fellow church member approached you and said, “Do you agree with the position the pastor has taken on this issue?” If you really do have some questions in your mind about the matter you’ll be tempted to say, “Why no, I don’t! I don’t think he understands the problem or sees the whole picture.”

If you say something like that, you’ve just sinned with your mouth. The proper response would be, “Rather than making a public comment, I think it would be more appropriate if I discussed it with the pastor in private. I’m praying for the pastor and I know God is in control.”

That is the response of a mature Christian. Spiritual babies don’t exercise that kind of control over their tongues.

Discernment vs. Judgment

Sometimes you'll hear a Christian who is constantly pointing out the flaws and failings of others defend this practice in the name of something called "discernment." "I'm not judging the brother," you'll hear them say piously, **"but the Bible tells us to have discernment."**

Yes, there is such a thing as biblical discernment. But many believers who think they are operating in spiritual discernment are really doing nothing more than fleshly finger pointing and judging.

There is a difference between discernment and judgment. Knowing the difference will help you avoid sinning with your mouth.

One who discerns, thoroughly examines himself before evaluating the actions of others.

Let every man examine himself. For if we judge ourselves, we should not be judged. (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31)

On the other hand, one who judges, condemns others for the very problems he is yet to overcome.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. (Romans 2:1)

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Romans 14:10)

God's Word is full of warnings about getting into judgment toward other believers. God doesn't need you to pass judgment on anyone. He can handle the job without your help.

There is another way that discernment differs from judgment. One who discerns checks the accuracy of all the information before reaching a conclusion. One who judges forms opinions based on first impressions and

hearsay. The “judge” looks for evidence to support the opinion he or she has already formed. They look for validation and confirmation of their biases and prejudices.

What does the Bible have to say about this? Here are just a few of the many scriptures that speak to this important subject:

*But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.
(I Corinthians 2:15)*

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (I Thessalonians 5:21)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (I John 4:1)

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24)

Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

(John 7:51)

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. (James 4:11)

There is yet a third contrast between judgment and discernment. One who discerns deals as privately as possible with the problem he sees. The one who judges, publicly exposes those he condemns.

As we have seen, the very words of Jesus Himself validate this principle:

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (Matthew 18:15)

Purpose in your heart to always operate in discernment, never judgment.

Reproving (Rebuking) vs. Railing (Reviling)

No discussion of sins of the mouth would be complete without a biblical examination of the act of *reproving*. This is another area in which many believers misread the Bible and get off into sin.

There is a time, a place and a method for reproving or rebuking a fellow Christian. The scripture makes this clear. But the Bible also talks about a sin called “railing” or “reviling.” Many believers think they are engaged in the godly act of reproving when, in reality, they are engaged in the sin of railing. What’s the difference? Let’s look at the Scriptures and see.

To reprove, means to lovingly encourage another believer to correct a fault or area of sin. A rebuke is similar only stronger. To rebuke takes on the essence of a command.

Railing (or reviling), on the other hand, means to reproach, denounce, insult or speak

evil of. Railing is one of the things we saw listed in 1 Corinthians (along with fornication and idolatry) that was grounds for breaking fellowship.

One who reproveth seeks to restore the offender through exhortation. One who rails seeks only to expose a person he or she has already judged. By bringing someone else down, they seek to elevate themselves.

Railing is nasty business. The thief on the cross that mocked Jesus is described as railing. (Luke 23:39) We're told that others who mocked Jesus as He died for them "railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days."

In sharp contrast to railing, godly reproof combines love with truth.

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (Ephesians 4:15)

Truth without love is harshness. Love

without truth is compromise.

A Commitment

Make a quality commitment right now before the Lord. Purpose in your heart to never again speak a bad report about a brother or sister in Christ. Determine before God to speak only those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. (Philippians 4:8)

Do that and you'll avoid the sins of the mouth. You'll please God and be a vessel that is worthy to display His glory.

BOOKS BY CREFLO A. DOLLAR JR.

- * Capturing the Reality of Heaven and Hell
- * Confidence: The Missing Substance of Faith
- * The Divine Order of Faith: How to Get from the Problem to the Answer
- * Exposing the Spirit of Competitive Jealousy
- * The Force of Integrity
- * Hearing from God and Walking in the Comfort of the Holy Spirit
- * Lasciviousness: The Results of Neglect
- * Rightness vs. Righteousness
- * Understanding God's Purpose for the Anointing
- * Attitudes

TAPE SERIES BY CREFLO A. DOLLAR JR.

- * Deliverance from Lasciviousness
- * Destroying the Root of Debt
- * How to Experience a Deeper Life in Prayer
- * God Wants You Healed
- * Understanding the Season of Sowing and Reaping
- * Understanding God's Way to Financial Prosperity
- * Covenant Love
- * Healing Your Marriage with Love and Affection
- * God's Plan for the Christian Family
- * The Covenant of Marriage

NON-SERIES TAPES BY CREFLO A. DOLLAR JR.

- * The Mind: The arena of Faith (Part 1)
- * The Mind: The arena of Faith (Part 2)
- * Unforgiveness: A Hindrance to Faith
- * How to Turn your Faith Loose
- * Making a Commitment to Do God's Will
- * A Revelation of Love
- * Commitment to Serve

If you would like more information about this ministry,
or are interested in becoming a partner, please write:



World Changers Ministries
Post Office Box 490124
College Park, Georgia 30349

About the Author

Creflo A. Dollar Jr. is Pastor and Founder of World Changers Ministries Christian Center, a non-denominational church located in College Park, Georgia. Formerly an Educational Therapist, he began the ministry with eight people in 1986. He is now an international teacher and conference speaker with a congregation of over 10,000 people. Creflo Dollar has been called by God to teach the Gospel with simplicity and understanding. He can be seen and heard throughout the world on “Changing Your World” broadcasts, via television and radio.