

The Steps To A *Sick Church!*

STEP NUMBER ONE

Ignorance of The Destructive Influence of The Tongue

JAMES CHAPTER THREE

1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!



6 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.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.



The Heart & Mouth Connection



"They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." (Psalm 12:2)



"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." (Psalm 15:2)



"Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." (Psalm 17:3)



"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)



"My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." (Psalm 39:3)



"My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." (Psalm 49:3)



"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." (Proverbs 4:23,24)



"The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many ..." (Proverbs 10:20,21)



"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad." (Proverbs 12:25)



"The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so." (Proverbs 15:7)



"The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness." (Proverbs 15:14)



"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things." (Proverbs 15:28)



"The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat." (Proverbs 15:30)



"The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." (Proverbs 16:1)



"The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning." (Proverbs 16:21)



"The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." (Proverbs 16:23)



"He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief." (Proverbs 17:20)



"He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." (Proverbs 22:11)



"Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge." (Proverbs 23:12)



"For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief." (Proverbs 24:2)

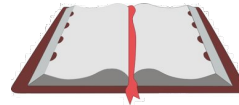


"He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife ..." (Proverbs 28:25)



"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." (Luke 6:45)

A Need For A Decision



"I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." (Psalm 39:1)

We Also Have An Ear Problem

"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Proverbs 14:15)



We Must Shun Evil Reports

"Those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD." (Numbers 14:37)

Five Ways To Detect An Evil Report

1. Unauthorized report
2. Distorted facts.
3. Incomplete facts.
4. False Report.
5. Attempt to influence you to form an evil opinion.



We will soon have a sick church when we are not aware of the destructive power of words. The Bible says, "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." (Proverbs 16:28) We can get sick physically when we are ignorant of the fact that someone we are in contact has a sickness. Sickness in a local church also can be transmitted from someone who is spiritually sick. He or she will soon pass their disease on to whomever will listen and soon the listener will catch the sickness.

Spiritually sick people are not happy unless they are sowing "strife." When we fellowship with them we will catch what they have. The Word of God says, "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." (Proverbs 17:9) The evil reports are not always verbal. They can be passed along by a gesture, facial expression or by the tone of voice. Each expression below could be a report on the pastor's message.



If we are ignorant of the depraved nature of those who give evil reports we will be contaminated by those reports as sure as we are we would be infected with any physical sickness that is contagious.

People who spread evil reports do it because they are bitter about something. We are warned in Hebrews 12:15 warns us to be *"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"* (Hebrews 12:15) Sometimes people spread evil reports because they are envious. James 3:14 warns against *"...bitter envying and strife in your hearts ..."* (James 3:14) Notice James says the *"strife"* in their hearts causes them to *"lie against the truth."* Simply put, they are liars. Verse 16 continues, *"For where envying and strife is there is confusion ..."* He also adds, *"and every evil work."*



Listening to evil reports is not a light thing with God. According to James chapter three the person who spreads evil reports is a bitter, envious, strife-filled, liar who is a confused, evil worker. When we are in contact with those people, we will catch their disease. We always become like whom we run with.



These wicked gossipers have a goal to tear down God-given spiritual leadership. We read in Psalm 106:25 they *"Murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD."* These liars said, *"It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians."* (Exodus 14:12) They *"murmured against Moses."* (Exodus 15:24) Soon their contagious disease infected others and *"The whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron."* (Exodus 16:2) How does God see it? Verse 7 reveals their, *"...murmurings against the Lord!"* Chapter 16:8 says, *"The Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him."*

Finally God was *finished with listening* to these evil workers and judgement fell on everyone. Exodus 17:8 says, *"Then came Amalek!"* We notice that the listeners were judged with the gossipers.

When gossipers are allowed to run freely through the church congregation, they tear down God-given leadership and they cause Christians to close their spirit to other Christians. They also produce more carriers of their spiritual sickness and cause unsaved people to reject Christ.

The first step to a sick church is *ignorance*. The second step to a sick church is *exposure* to the sickness. Entering into a conversation with a person who is contaminated with this evil disease exposes the listener to the evil. *The Word of God says, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished."* (Proverbs 27:12)

The only answer is isolation. Second Thessalonians says we are to, *"Note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."*

The Bible commands us to *"Mark them which cause divisions and offences..."* (Romans 16:17) Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit said, *"We command you.. that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."* (Second Thessalonians 3:6)

How To Detect A Carrier

The first thing they will do is test your spirit. They will trick you into asking for the report. They will ask for your counsel. They will offer inside information. They have search out details for their evil report.

How To Handle The Carrier

Ask...

1. What is your reason for telling me this?
2. Where did you get your information?
3. Have you gone directly to those involved?

Tell them...

1. You do not want to hear their evil report.
2. You will be quoting them when you check out what they have told you.

To do nothing is to allow the local church to be contaminated with the disease. James 3:6 says their wickedness, *"Defileth The Whole Body"* Proverbs 26:27 says, *"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."* Hebrews 12:15 says, *"Thereby many be defiled."*

Absalom

(A Bible Example - Second Samuel 2:15:1-6)

His Focus Was Deliberate

1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

He Sought Out The Disgruntled

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

He Made Himself Available To The Disgruntled

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

He Used His Position To Get Followers

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

He Stole The Hearts of The People

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Once a person is infected with the disease he will begin forming negative positions about the person who is being maligned. The infected person will take words and actions as supporting evidence of the gossip they have heard. The infected person will begin judging motives as a result of the gossip and they will back away from them in their spirit. You know you are infected with the disease when you find yourself repeating the evil report to others.

You are now infected with the disease. You are mentally and emotionally controlled by the evil report and the destructive spirit of the one who gave it.

Proverbs 17:4 says, *"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue."* Maybe you better read that verse again. God calls the one listens to a gossip a "wicked doer."

God calls the gossip a hater that *"dissembleth with his lips."* To dissemble is to conceal one's true motives. It is a wicked thing to take part in his or her hateful deceit. Proverbs 26:24,25 says, *"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; When he speaketh fair, believe him not; for there are seven abominations in his heart."* The Bible is plain. *"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."* (Leviticus 19:16)

The cure is to pray for cleansing from the sickness and pray for a genuine love for all involved.

Use Scriptures to cleanse your mind. *"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me ..."* (Psalm 19:13)



Ask God to help you make Ephesians 4:29 a reality in your life. - *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."*

Ask for help to live according to Proverbs 11:13 that says, *"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."*

Act On What You Have Heard

Tell the gossip you will be contacting the person who is spiritually responsible to handle the situation and then do it. These wicked people can only excel as they have someone to listen to them.

Paul warned about *"...grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."*
(Acts 20:29,30)

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."
(Ecclesiastes 8:11)