

8. Parental guidance and direction accompanied by discipline and punishment organize the soul to acquire restraints against them. These guidelines are not to be dictatorial but accompanied by encouragements to think, say, or do things that are honorable before God.
9. God honors His Word wherever it is found, especially in the souls of the believer and He defends His Word when a believer introduces it into the scrum of the Angelic Conflict—even though those who hear it may stridently disagree.
10. However, there are those believers who use their tongues to communicate the lie, spread false doctrine, gossip, and malign others, criticize the decisions of others over whom they have no responsibility.
11. Often this is done less obviously by spite which implies petty feelings of envy and resentment that are often expressed by small harassments.
12. So, the tongue is a small part of the body, but according to James, it boasts of great things:

**James 3:1** Fellow members of the royal family of God, stop the process of many of you by assuming the office of pastor-teacher, knowing that we shall take to ourselves a more severe execution of judgment.

**v. 2** We all commit many sins. If anyone does not sin in what he says, that same person is a mature nobleman, able because of doctrine to control the entire body with his volition.

**v. 3** Now if we push the bits into the horses' mouths so that they may obey us, we change the direction of their entire body.

**v. 4** Consider the example of ships which are quite large and are propelled under the influence of fierce winds upon its sails, yet it is guided by the positioning of a very small rudder toward whatever direction the volition of the ship's pilot determines.

**v. 5** So in this way the tongue is a small organ in the much larger human body, yet it keeps on arrogantly boasting exceedingly about great things. Perceive [ IM# 24 ] how a great forest is kindled by a single flame! (EXT)

## B. Sins of the Tongue Are Exposed throughout Scripture

**Romans 2:1** Therefore you are without excuse, every person who keeps on judging others; for in that you judge another person you actually condemn yourself, because you who are judging actually practice the same things. (EXT)



1. This is a form of blind arrogance. You are committing the worst of sins when you judge someone else for committing a sin. It is self-righteous arrogance to intervene in the affairs of Jesus Christ who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Heaven. He is the One Who judges. You do not have that prerogative.
2. He who judges another person is committing multiple levels of sinning. The sin of judging another person is for starters. That sin mentioned is now removed from him and placed on you. The process started with a mental attitude sin that was shifted to the tongue for broadcast.
3. This is an around-the-horn—third, to second, to first—triple play!
4. To judge means to gossip, to malign, to try to run someone else's life and to do so verbally. Those who are self-motivated to handle the affairs of other people guarantee they will be miserable as long as they live.
5. The most miserable people are those who are always trying to run someone else's life. This phrase, "keep on judging," has to do with verbal criticism, maligning, bullying.
6. Romans 1:18–32 is a Pauline exposé of a divine diatribe against the perversions of mankind. The Holy Spirit does not soft sell His wrath.
7. In Romans 2:1, he turns his sights on those who criticize those in the last 4 paragraphs of chapter 1 for their naughty lifestyles. Those in chapter 2 who take it upon themselves to judge those sinners find they are going to be judged themselves.
8. The verb, "keeps on judging" is the present active participle of κρίνω (*krínō*). Their problem is self-righteousness which puts them in the cosmic system. The chapter continues in much the same way that the Lord did in Matthew 7:1–2 described above in points 1 and 2. Same thing here.
9. This triple play, this Operation Ricochet, this getting a "dose of one's own medicine" is also the subject of this passage which addresses self-righteous unbelievers. We pick up the flow beginning with:

**Romans 2:2** But we have come to know that the judicial verdict from God keeps on being in accordance against those who practice such things.

**v. 3** But do you conclude this, O man, who judges those who practice similar things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judicial verdict from God?

**v. 4** Or do you treat with contempt the riches of His gracious generosity and clemency and patience, not knowing that the graciousness of God brings you to conversion—a change of attitude toward Christ?



**Romans 2:5** But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath [ **Great White Throne** ] and the disclosure of the just judgment from God. (EXT)

10. These behavior patterns expose the fact that such people are living in a lifestyle of arrogance when they manifest the problem by gossiping, judging, nitpicking, and browbeating other believers.
11. The biblical principle, referenced above in two passages of Scripture, indicates that the divine policy regarding judging other believers is a serious violation of divine policy.
12. No person knows all the facts behind a comment, an action, or a rumor to which one imputes an assumption. But God knows all the facts and argues such in:

**Romans 11:33** Oh, the inexhaustibility and depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable and unfathomable His ways!

**v. 34** For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?

13. 1 Corinthians 2:16 clearly informs us that the only one who can know the mind of Christ is by his consistent study of the Word of God. We, even then, are not His counselor from doing so, but through the Word of God we are counseled by Him.

### C. Principles

1. Believers guilty of slandering, maligning, or judging others is a visible loser in the Christian way of life.
2. No believer can be occupied with the sins and failures of others and at the same time make the spiritual advance toward spiritual maturity.
3. All believers sin. But each one is provided with the privacy of the priesthood to confess those sins to the Father and then keep moving in the plan of God. No one else is qualified to prosecute those sins and no one else is qualified to forgive them.
4. To judge other believers prevents God from prosecuting the case. Doing so requires Him to make the necessary adjustments to coordinate additional punishments upon those who intrude upon God's justice.
5. When someone goes public with a fellow believer's sins it complicates the situation.
6. The one who committed the sin is now embarrassed, frustrated that it is now in the public domain, and his ability to seek forgiveness from the Lord is hindered by this invasion of his privacy.



7. Principle: The sins and failures of fellow believers must be left in the hands of God for prosecution.
8. What must then follow is the prosecution of the gossip who has intervened into the administration of divine justice.
9. The Body of Christ is ideally made up of those who isolate themselves inside the bubble, ignore the failures of others, and tend to their business before the Lord.
10. Placing top priority on growing in grace and allowing God to manage the members of His flock would allow all parishioners to grow in grace uninterrupted by the cosmic intrusions of busybodies.
11. Peter provides a great summary of the above principles and their resolutions in 1 Peter 3:8–12 where he quotes Psalm 34:12–16:

**1 Peter 3:8** To sum it all up, be harmonious, sympathetic, affectionate, be compassionate, and humble;

**v. 9** not retaliating evil for evil or insult for insult, but, on the contrary, blessing instead; you were called for the purpose of acquiring a permanent inheritance of happiness.

**v. 10** For he that keeps on desiring to keep on loving life and have a panoramic view of intrinsically good days, let him refrain his tongue from the ultimate source of evil, and his lips that they speak no deceit.

**v. 11** Let him turn away from evil and produce divine good. Let him search for tranquility of soul, and once found, pursue it vigorously.

**v. 12** For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against them that habitually do evil.<sup>6</sup> (EXT)

#### D. The Conception, Pregnancy, and Deliverance of Sins of the Tongue

1. The human soul includes volition with the option to commit sins of the tongue. The ability to do so causes more lasting problems in a few minutes than a barroom brawl.
2. On this subject we quote an excerpt from Eliphaz' speech in the Book of Job when he accuses Job of ignoring the sinfulness of man:

**Job 15:35** They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, and their mind prepares deception. (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed [Psalm 34: Superscription]." (*The Holy Bible* [Chicago: The John A. Hertel Co., 1941], 625).



3. Eliphaz begins this conclusion with the Qal infinitive of the verb **הָרָה** (*harah*): “to conceive, to become pregnant.” Those in context are considered to be unbelievers.
4. What they conceive is “mischief,” the noun, **עָמָל** (*amal*): “trouble caused by human agency; an instigator of quarrels.”
5. This person’s sin nature impregnates the soul with the idea of inciting quarrels.
6. This pregnancy progresses as the soul considers how to best incite the quarrel. This culminates with the words “bring forth” which is the Qal infinitive of **יָלַד** (*yalath*): “to give birth; to deliver; used figuratively to depict evil people bringing forth iniquity” which is the next sin on the agenda:
7. “Iniquity” is the noun, **אָוֵן** (*awen*): “a wicked, unjust, or unrighteous act.” This is the point of giving birth to a vile sin of the tongue that harms another person’s reputation, character, or privacy.
8. As the verse continues, we learn the source of this iniquity, the noun, **בֶּטֶן** (*beten*). Literally it refers to the “belly, womb, or inner body.” However, the application here is figurative for the soul:

**The Inner Man.** The *beten* also represents the “inner man,” in which thoughts are stored up and from which they issue forth. Man is advised to keep the words of the wise in his *beten* (LXX *kardia*), having them continually ready for a proper time when they may be spoken (Proverbs 22:18). The *ruach*, “spirit,” which carries forth these words, is also in the *beten*. Evil thoughts can also be stored up in the *beten* (Job 15:35), but if a man has spoken well his *beten* is satisfied (Proverbs 18:20).<sup>7</sup>

9. From the context of Job 15:35, we discern this word’s reference is to the stream of consciousness in the soul. It is from that inventory that the last two words of the verse come into view.
10. The first is the Hiph’il imperfect, active voice of the verb, **בִּטֵּן** (*beten*) which means this action is caused by the person’s free will and is a habitual behavior pattern.
11. If this is not bad enough the verse ends with the resultant impact of this action, the noun, **מִרְמָה** (*mirmah*): “deception; the intentional misleading of someone by distorting or withholding the truth.”

<sup>7</sup> David N. Freedman and J. Lundbom, “בֶּטֶן,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, rev. ed., eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 2:96, 97.



**Job 15:35** They conceive the idea to instigate quarrels that give birth to iniquity, therefore their soul's stream of consciousness keeps on preparing to deceive. (EXT)

12. All the better English translations interpret the verse's first verb, **הָרָה (harah)**: "to conceive." The NIV and NET Bibles translate it, "conceive trouble," while the NASB and KJV choose "conceive mischief."
13. Both "trouble" and "mischief" translate the noun, **עָמַל ('amal)**, which carries the idea of instigating quarrels.
14. This problem is approached in several ways in Scripture. Let's use five illustrations to characterize the sins of the tongue instigated under the phrase, **הָרָה עָמַל (harah 'amal)**: "conceive ... quarrels or trouble."
  1. Believers who have a tendency toward legalism, but have not acquired grace orientation, can be very self-righteous and even get involved in crusader arrogance. This is often revealed in their desire to gossip about grace-oriented believers.
  2. Some believers view themselves as mature Christians based on their adherence to cultural lifestyles, i.e., establishment norms and standards. This approach imposes human viewpoint over biblical absolutes. Such types often criticize the pastor who teaches doctrinal principles that occasionally challenge cultural standards.
  3. A combination of illustrations 1 and 2 can result in a legalistic inventory of ideas whose applications are motivated by erroneous working objects that produce dead works by which they criticize other believers for their failures to comply.
  4. Believers who may show up at church but either are not interested in serious study of the Word of God or, on the other hand, attend happy-clappy churches who entertain rather than earnestly teach the Word. Emotionalism trumps serious Bible study with accompanying criticism of those who prefer the latter.
  5. Those who are inconsistent in their spiritual growth live their Christian lives out of fellowship. Consequently, they are unable to apply the truths found in Scripture and therefore are restricted by their ignorance. This results in frustration which is expressed by their criticisms of those who are grace oriented.

## E. Summary Principles

1. Continuation of the sins of the tongue indicates that the sin is facilitated and has led the believer into reversionism and unreversed will lead to the sin unto death.





**Psalm 12:2** They speak falsehood to one another; with flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

**v. 3** May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks great things;

**v. 4** Who have said, “With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?”

2. God protects and blesses the believer who is victimized by the sins of the tongue. This is the grace provision whereby grace turns cursing into blessing. (Job 5:19–21)
3. The untamed tongue can destroy an entire congregation. This is the underlying principle which we have studied in James 3:5–6. Since this is an established fact, then no congregation is immune to this threat.
4. Paul gives a good example of this threat in:

**2 Timothy 2:14** Be reminding the congregation of these things and charge them in the presence of God that it is useless to argue about words, which is useless to do, and it leads to reversionism among the hearers.

5. When correct doctrine is taught, those who hear will be tested on that information. For example, doctrine that communicates the problems associated with gossip, maligning, and judging, while rejecting the teaching authority of the pastor, fails the test.

**2 Timothy 2:15** Be motivated to present yourself approved to God as a teacher not put to shame, accurately and skillfully exegeting the Word of truth.

**v. 16** But keep on avoiding cosmic and empty chattering, for that will advance further into reversionism.

**v. 17a** In fact, their talk will spread like gangrene or cancer [γάγγραινα (gángraina)<sup>8</sup>]. (EXT)

6. Scripture offers encouragement to those who avoid sins of the tongue:

**Psalm 34:12** Who is the man who desires life and loves length of days that he may see good?

(End JAS3-83.Rev. See JAS3-84 for continuation of study at p. 291.)

<sup>8</sup> “γάγγραινα: A disease involving severe inflammation, which left unchecked can become a destructive ulcerous condition, gangrene, cancer, of spreading ulcers (medical term since Hippocrates (c. 460 B.C.),” in Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 186.

