

Leaky Lips

Long Beach Alliance Church

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No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

~James 3:8-11 (NIV)

1) Fragrant Words

- A) Following the theme of being imitators of God as His beloved children (Ephesians 5:1), we are provided the best example of what it means to be a child of God through Jesus Christ (5:2). As God's Son, Christ reveals how to live self-sacrificially, for the benefit of others, rather than in destructive self-indulgent lives (5:3-7).
- B) Even though we are loved by God and made "saints" (holy ones) because of faith in the wonderful sacrifice of Jesus Christ (5:1-2, also 2:8-9), walking in Christ is very difficult (note 4:1, 5:1, 8, 15) because of our own sinful past (4:17-20), and the self-indulgent, temptation-saturated culture in which we live (5:3-7).
- C) Recognizing this reality is crucial. The Christian life is both wonderful (we are God's beloved children!), and frustratingly difficult (we still live in a sinful world!). Jesus Christ cautions all of us about the difficulties of 'walking worthy' of our calling (John 16:33)! Our clarity of vision helps us remain focused (Romans 8:18-28).
- D) Response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to 'walking in love as Christ has loved us' (Ephesians 5:2) is ongoing. Those things in us and in our world (sexual immorality and all impurity and covetousness/idolatry, 5:3, 5) are a sobering reminder... The enemy wants to destroy anything belonging to Jesus, especially you (cf. 6:10-13).

2) Spiritually Bad Breath

- A) Elaborating on the triad of sexually oriented sins which destroy walking in Christ's love (5:2-3), is a more subtle and nuanced level of heart-commitment to the love of Christ which are revealed in the words we use about sexuality (5:4). Immoral sexual jokes, humor, and conversation should not flow from our hearts because our hearts are captivated in responding to the love of Christ (cf. James 3:8-11).
- B) Each of this new triad of verbal sins (note the expansion of "corrupting talk" from Ephesians 4:29) takes the previously noted sexually immoral behaviors (5:3) into the deeper location of the heart. This is spiritual bad breath coming from the stomach, the gut, the heart of the individual.
- C) Thirst for sexually self-indulgent actions (5:3) and/or words (5:4), as either an entertained consumer or an entertaining provider, reveal what the heart honors most. What consumes you is shown by whatever is leaking from your lips, the "sermon" family and friends hear flowing out of your mouth!

3) Thanksgiving = Worship of God

- A) Why is "thanksgiving" the answer to the question of "what is proper among saints" (5:3-4)? Simply, in every instance of thanksgiving, the Bible has in mind worshiping God for what He has done (cf. Romans 14:6-8; Philippians 4:4-7). Thanksgiving glorifies (properly reflects) who God is and what God does (Colossians 2:6-7).
- B) How do we 'walk in love' out of our sinful pasts? How do we 'walk in love' in a self-indulgent, sexually-saturated culture? Give authentic and genuine thanks to God for all He is and does. Live gratefully, in thanks. Thanksgiving is the response of those who are beloved in Christ; lives transformed in communion with God.



Growth Group Guide

“leaky lips”
ephesians 5:3-7 • may 3 – may 8

Ice Breaker!

Who is your favorite comedian, and why?

Looking Up!

The Bible seems particularly concerned over sexual sins. Do you ever feel like the Bible is a bit obsessed with what happens in the private sex lives of people? Why are sexually-oriented issues such a big deal in the Bible?

Let's read a couple of different paragraphs from the Bible which will help us with our Growth Group discussion. First, read our main text from Ephesians 4:29-5:7. If Jesus defeated sin and death, why are they still a problem?

Next, read Ephesians 6:10-13. If we are blind in our battle, how are we supposed to win the fight?

Finally, read Colossians 3:12-17. Does “being thankful” seem like a good solution for sinful problems?

Leaning In!

If idolatry is an issue for those involved in sexual sin, what are the solutions? How do these solutions work?

Read Matthew 15:18-20a. If what flows out of our mouths comes from what resides in our hearts, that should tell us that what we put into our hearts is very significant to God (see Philippians 4:8-9). Are there things which entertain you (alone or with others) which we are warned against in Ephesians 5:2-3?

Stepping Out!

The world offers every possible form of distraction from ‘walking worthy of our calling’ in Christ (Ephesians 4:1).

How do we meaningfully live “in the real world” without becoming “of the world” (see John 17:14-18)?

Respond!

Many people work with Christians, live next-door (or near-to-next-door) with Christians, have Christians for friends, and sometimes there are even people who live with Christians in the same home – but they never “hear” about Jesus. Oh, they hear the words about Christ, but they don't ever “see Christ” in the lives of some Christians.

In fact, in comparing their own life to those of some Christians, there is virtually no difference at all. Does this describe your life, your experience, your walk with God?

How can this change? How will this change?

This Week In Action & In Prayer!

Make Hebrews 12:1-17 your prayer this week.

Are you “looking to Jesus?” Or are your eyes elsewhere?

Turn while there is still time.

Do not wait one more minute. Receive grace today.

