

## Speaking to Oneself

### Commentary for January 15, 2019 — We Always Speak to Ourselves First

Whenever we talk to others, we are speaking to ourselves first. Whenever we write to others, we are writing to ourselves first. When an author writes a novel such as Leo Tolstoy in his massive *War and Peace*, he wrote it to himself first. The same for Jane Austin when she wrote *Pride and Prejudice*. We speak to ourselves all the time.<sup>1</sup>

**"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."**

• **Matthew 12:35–37**

Words have negative power. Evil words we speak against others affect us as well, as James, the brother of Jesus, tells us:

**"... the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."**

• **James 3:5–8**

### **Babbling Babies**

Jesus told His disciples what would happen to unbelieving towns He preached in:

**"I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes."**

• **Matthew 11:25**

We as believers are babes to God. Babies babble as they begin to learn more of the world around them. They learn to articulate their feelings and desires, as well as their pains and joys by crying, smiling, giggling, whining. And babies babble. Hopefully we babble less as mature Christians but we are still babies from God's point of view. Sometimes when we pray we can express nothing to God except groans, like babies:

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<sup>1</sup> God spoke creation into existence beginning in Genesis 1:3, creating the heavens and the earth with His words. He expressed Himself and He did so for Himself first. Everything was (and is) done by God for His own glory, which is right and proper. All His creatures should do and say everything for His glory. Now we speak to ourselves first, even in our thoughts. The apostle Paul tells us that eventually **"... every tongue should [and will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"** (Philippians 2:9–11 quoting Isaiah 45:21–23). In ancient times when people read books, letters, plays, or accounting figures, they always read aloud, never silently. Written words were always spoken, and people who could read, read to themselves out loud.

“For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

• *Romans 8:22–23*

God and Christ know you better than you know yourself. Trust them to know and do what is best for you. We should strive to speak to ourselves only good words so we may speak good words to others: **“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!”** (Proverbs 15:23). The words we speak to ourselves as well as to others build our character, whether positive or negative. We shall be judged by the words we speak. The apostle John wrote, **“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth”** (1 John 3:18). The apostle Peter knew believers were as babes:

**“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”**

• *1 Peter 2:1–2*

The apostle Paul wrote to the *ekklesia* in Corinth:

**“I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes [infants] in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto [before] you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able.”**

• *1 Corinthians 3:1–2*

Paul’s speaking of **“babes in Christ”** is not just a metaphor. They were babes spiritually. Paul wrote in Ephesians that his work was being done:

**“For the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the [full] knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, ... But speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ ...”**

• *Ephesians 4:12–15*

## **Paul Tells Us What Spiritual Maturity Is**

**“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. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.”**

• *Ephesians 4:29–5:1*

