

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

June 2, 2019

"A Time to Be Silent"

by Frank Himmel

The Preacher observed that there is "a time to be silent and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:7). There are other times in his list, too. In context, his point is not really that we should do things at the appropriate time, but that our failure to recognize the time appointed by God often explains the vanity of our efforts. Nevertheless, there is much to be said for acting at opportune times.

Most of us are more successful at finding the time to speak than the time to refrain from speaking. Yet both Scripture and common sense reveal times to be silent, among them...

When God speaks. Do you remember Eli's advice to Samuel when he discerned that it was God calling the boy? "Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, for Your servant is listening'" (1 Samuel 3:9).

God speaks to us through the Bible. It is a time to listen, yet some of us cannot stop babbling our own views long enough to hear what God has to say. Or, we hardly let Him finish before we start objecting to what He says. This is the context of James' warning, "... but let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow

to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (1:19-20).

When others speak. Common courtesy requires that we not interrupt one another. At times the urge is strong, especially when we disagree with what is being said. Nevertheless, speaking in turn is far more profitable than boisterous exchanges in which all yell and none listen. Paul insisted on this one-at-a-time rule in our assemblies (1 Corinthians 14:26-33).



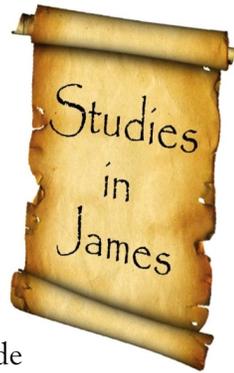
When experience speaks. Years ago in a business meeting the elders were proposing some building renovations. Almost all the men were in agreement. Several teenagers seated at the front voiced considerable opposition to this "waste of the Lord's money" and took the elders to task for such poor judgment. I thought at the time how foolish my friends looked. What did any of us know about such things? I decided it was a time to be silent.

Every generation tells the next they could avoid considerable trouble by listening to the voice of experience. It is a time for the young to be silent, but many do not think so and end up having to learn the hard way.

When you are ignorant. "Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him; the beginning of his talking is folly, and the end of it is wicked madness. Yet the fool multiplies ▶

A Double-tongued Man

by Frank Himmel



“With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way” (3:9-10).

In an earlier discussion James made reference to “a double-minded man” (1:8). Now at the conclusion of his paragraph about the tongue he condemns what we would call “a double-tongued man”; or sometimes we say “two-faced.”

This is the man who tells his wife he loves her, then a short time later he is harshly cutting her down. It is the man who tells the preacher he had a good lesson today, then on the way home bemoans how long and dry it was. It is the man who offers prayers at church on Sunday and spouts profanity at work on Monday. It is the man who sings about his faith in God but constantly complains about his lot in life. It is the man who says he is willing to help but consistently says no to every specific request.

A. T. Robertson effectively expressed the problem in historical terms: “We make our tongue a sort of combination of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim.”

The problem, of course, is not the tongue itself; it is the heart, the source of our communication. James notes that. “Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh” (vv. 11-12).

Conflicting speech reflects a conflicted heart. That is where the cleanup must begin. Jesus observed, “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart” (Luke 6:45). ■

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words” (Ecclesiastes 10:12-14a). As the old saying goes, “It is better to keep your mouth shut and let others suspect you are ignorant than to open it and remove all doubt.” Proverbs 18:7 says a fool’s mouth is his ruin.

When you have nothing beneficial to say. Beware of talking just to talk. “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:5).

When you have been talking a while. Try not to monopolize in conversation. Give others a chance to say something or to speak to someone else. Don’t nag. Don’t keep replowing the same ground. “...he who restrains his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19).

It is time for me to be silent. ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Howard Moore	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Clifton Lefort	Brian Wilson
OPENING PRAYER	Kerry Gray	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Bruce Williams	
CUP	John Baucom	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Justin Candella	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	J B Williams
CLOSING PRAYER	Adam Gibson	Stephen Lefort