

***Psalm 141:1-10***

*"LORD, I cry out to You; Make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice wicked works With men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.*

*Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked. Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the cliff, And they hear my words, for they are sweet. Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave, As when one plows and breaks up the earth. But my eyes are upon You, O GOD the Lord; In You I take refuge; Do not leave my soul destitute. Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, And from the traps of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I escape safely."*

**Foot in Mouth Disease**

Robert Orben wrote: "Every speaker has a mouth; An arrangement rather neat. Sometimes it's filled with wisdom. Sometimes it's filled with feet." This awkward position is a plight common to all.

Perhaps one of the foremost reasons for man's perpetual problem of putting his feet in his mouth is the all to common tendency to lie. I quote an article in the Toronto Star (January 7, 1995): "A lot of people have become so inured to the idea of the so called harmless lie, they don't know the difference. At that point, you're just lying out of instinct". Although lying has become instinct, its destructive power has not diminished "The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell." (James 3:6 NIV).

One of the joys of salvation is to see the Lord change the inner man in such a way that the message of the lips takes a complete turn around. Says David "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God." (Psalms 40:3 NIV). Nevertheless, a personal relationship with the living Christ still requires the spiritual disciplines to see that "transformed tongue" emerge.

The Christian must commit to God's guide for speech: "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." (Ephesians 4:15 NIV). The truth must be spoken in love, putting the total interests (spiritual, emotional, relational) of the listeners first.

A believer must pursue God's goal for speech: "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalms 19:14 NIV). To determine in any situation to say "What Jesus would say" is one approach to measure what would please Him. The key is to determine to do so.

Finally, to know Christ is to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (see John 14), and therefore avails the Christian of the ever present guard for speech: "Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips." (Psalms 141:3 NIV). To commence each day in prayer with a request for the Lord to help us consider what is appropriate to say before our lips go into action, is an answer to prayer that the Lord is anxious to fulfil.

Paul's words to each Christian must be taken seriously: "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices." (Colossians 3 NIV).

There is no guarantee that Christians will avoid that common problem of "foot in mouth" disease, however becoming tangled in the web of lies is inexcusable for those who are called by God's own name.

***What is my response:***

---

---

---

---