

How to Answer

Prov.15:28 *“The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.”*

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I. The Meaning of the Text

- A. The 2 groups of individuals mentioned
1. The righteous - These are the individuals who have been made righteous in God’s sight by the blood of the Lamb.
 - The righteous “*study*” how to answer a matter - the ex. of Daniel, in Dan.2:16-18; the ex. of Nehemiah in Neh.1:4
 - **Why** do the righteous “*study*” how to answer questions that are put to them? Why not just speak whatever they have on the minds? **Because** they are not their own, they have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ and therefore they seek to glorify Him, 1 Cor.6:19, 20; **Because** they seek to manifest their love for God by glorifying Him in everything that they do. Jn.14:15; **Because** they are Christ’s ambassadors, 2 Cor.5:20; **Because** they are to be imitators of God, Eph.5:1; Rom.8:29
 2. The wicked - These are the individuals, who by nature, love darkness rather than light. (Jn.3:19). They are described in Rom.3:10-12; the wicked are in the bondage of sin – Jn.8:43; Rom.8:7, 8
 - Do the wicked ever “*study*” how to answer questions put to them? They do “*study*” how to answer, but it is to preserve their own standing in the eyes of men and/or to advance their own self-glory. See an ex. in Mk.11:29-33
 - **Why** do the wicked speak as they do? **Because** their “*...carnal mind is at enmity with God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*” Rom.8:7, 8; **Because** they are the children of the devil – I Jn.3:10; 3) **Because** they are the children of disobedience, Eph.2:2; **Because** they are of their father the devil, and the desires of their father, they will do. Jn.8:44
- B. The Difference between these 2 groups of people, is what is in their respective hearts.
1. The righteous have new hearts that have been given to them by God, when they were effectually called by the Holy Spirit Ezek.36:26, 27; Jer.31:33, 34b; Phil.2:13 *“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”*
 2. The wicked, being natural descendants of fallen Adam, are born with sinful hearts that are “*...deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...*” Jer.17:9; Jer.13:23; Jn.3:19, 20; Rom.8:8

3. The Good News of the Gospel, is that God is able to give new hearts to replace sinful hearts. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit’s work of Effectual Calling in the heart of the wicked.

II. An Example from the earthly life of Christ Jesus – Jn. 8:1-11

- A. Prov.15:28b illustrated in the life of Christ Jesus – “*...but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.*”
1. The wicked identified: “*Then the scribes and the Pharisees...*” 8:3a
 2. The evil that was poured forth is stated in Jn.8:4b, 5
 - a. “*Teacher*” – these wicked men addressed the Lord Jesus politely and with respect - so **no evil spoken here**
 - b. “*...this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.*” – stating the fact of this woman’s sin and guilt – **no evil spoken here** if it were true (and it seems to be true)
 - c. “*Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned.*” – this is what Lev.20:10 states – so **no evil spoken here**
 - d. “*But what do You say?*” – **Here is the spoken evil!!**
 - The **evil was in their intent** of publicly doing and saying what they did – attempting to discredit and dishonor the person and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The evil was in their hearts!**
 - e. These wicked, religious leaders had “studied” how to word their question to the Lord Jesus so as to entrap Him in whatever answer He would give.
 - IF Christ Jesus disagreed with what Moses, in the law, had commanded, THEN these wicked men would accuse Jesus of not being under God’s law and setting up Himself as an independent authority that was apart from God’s law and against God’s law. They would accuse Christ of contradicting Himself when said in Matt.5:17, “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*”
 - IF Christ Jesus agreed with what Moses, in the law, commanded, condemning this woman to death and saying that these scribes and Pharisees should stone her to death, THEN these wicked men would accuse Jesus to the Roman governor for Jesus taking upon Himself to condemn a person to death, which belonged to the Roman governor to do. cf. Rom.13:4
 - IF Christ Jesus agreed with what Moses, in the law, commanded, saying that this adulterous woman should be turned over to the Roman governor to be condemned and put to death, THEN these wicked men would charge Jesus with severity and acting inconsistently with Himself, who received such sort of sinners, and ate with them; and had declared that publicans and harlots would enter into the

kingdom of heaven, when the scribes and the Pharisees would not.

3. Note the heartlessness of these wicked men - They had no care or concern for this woman.
4. So the evil that poured forth from these wicked men was in the intent of what they said. They wanted to destroy, to neutralize the life-changing truth that Christ Jesus taught > the gracious, kind and glorious “Good News” of the Gospel: that guilty sinners can be forgiven by God for all their sins by repenting of their sin and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ

B. Prov.15:28a illustrated – “*The heart of the righteous studies how to answer...*”

1. The righteous identified: *the Lord Jesus Christ*. Being the God-man, Jesus had no need to “study” this situation to know how to answer
2. The righteous answer that was given by the Lord Jesus
 - a. Initially, the Lord Jesus said nothing. Not only did He keep silent; He also stooped down and wrote on the ground 8:6b
 - b. The words of Christ to His enemies – “*He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.*” (8:7b) This was Biblically required - Dt.17:6, 7
 - The recorded result of Christ’s answer (8:9), “*Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with oldest even to the last.*”
 - c. Jesus’ words to this guilty sinner, (8:10b) “*Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?*”
 - d. Jesus’ further words to this guilty sinner (8:11b),
 - “*Neither do I condemn you...*” HOW could Jesus truthfully say this?!
 - Jn.3:17 “*for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*”
 - Jesus did not acquit this woman of her sin! She was still a guilty, judgment-deserving sinner
 - Jesus did not condemn this woman to physical death, because that authority had been placed in the hands of the Roman governor (Rom.13:4)
 - The Lord Jesus was not a civil judge, to whom judgment belonged and by whom judgment was to be rendered. A further ex. of this is in Lk.12:13, 14
 - “*...go and sin not more.*” Was that even possible? No, it wasn’t! Not for her, not for any natural-born person! Then WHY give this impossible command to this sinful woman?

- In God’s mercy, this woman had escaped, at the hands of wicked men, the law’s righteous punishment for her particular sin of adultery. (Not every sin we commit in this earthly life, receives its deserved punishment in this earthly life.) BUT such temporal mercy will not last forever. If this woman continued in her sinful manner of living till the day she died, she never escaped the eternal judgment of her sin when stood before God to be judged eternally.
 - To convict and convince this woman of her sinful state! (totally depraved) – not just for this one particular sin in which she was caught, but to convict her of ALL her sins as well as her sinful nature, which desperately needed to be changed by God. She needed to be born again, to be made a creation in which all sinful things pass away and all things become new. She needed a radical change of thinking and living! She needed a new heart!
 - To convince this woman of her desperate need of Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord!
 - Jesus did not condemn her; she was already condemned – her sin had done that.
 - Jesus did not condone (approve) her sinfulness, that is why He said, “*...go and sin not more.*”
 - It is not possible for a sinner to stop sinning in and of themselves. Sinners are by nature the sons of disobedience and children of wrath (Eph.2:2). Who then can be saved? “*...With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.*” (Mk.10:27b)
 - Jesus is presenting the Good News of the gospel to this needy sinner!
3. “*The heart of the righteous* (in this situation, it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself) *studies how to answer...*”
 - a. The Lord Jesus gave an answer that defeated the attempt of His enemies to discredit Him and His teaching. He defeated their attempt to neutralize or stop the life-changing truth that Christ Jesus taught > the “Good News” of the Gospel.
 - b. The Lord Jesus, out of a heart of love and concern for this adulterous woman, gave an answer that proclaimed that life-changing truth, that “Good News” of the Gospel to this guilty woman - that guilty sinners can be forgiven by God for all their sins by repenting of their sin and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the Gospel Call to Salvation!

4. That was the Gospel Call to Salvation that Jesus proclaimed to this sinful woman, and it is the same Gospel Call to Salvation that we proclaim to sinners today!

D. **The Text:** Prov.15:28 *“The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.”*

III. Applications

A. General Applications (Questions)

- What comes out of your mouth? Does it edify others?
Does it glorify God? Where do you get the things that you say? Are they from God? Are you imitating God in what you say, in the way you say it and in the purpose for which you say it (not for revenge, condemn, return evil for evil, hurt for hurt)?
- Do you think through what you are going to say and how you are going to say it?
- Do you study the situation you are in?
- Do you consider how your words will impact others - those to whom you speak via text, email, facebook and twitter?
- Do you just speak your mind without a filter or do you study how to answer?

B. Application to the Unconverted, to lost sinners needing a Savior

- Don't be like these scribes and Pharisees, who were convicted of their sins, BUT walked away from Christ Jesus, the only One who could forgive their sins - God must open the heart.
- Be like this woman, though guilty, yet did not walk away from Christ – A.W. Pink thinks she was saved because called Jesus “*Lord*” while the religious leaders only called Him “*Teacher*”.
- Come to Jesus Christ and be saved!
 - Matt.11:28-30 *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **T**ake My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **F**or My yoke is easy and My burden is light” .*
 - Jn.6:37 *“...the one who comes to Me (confessing their sins and believing the Lord Jesus Christ) I will by no wise cast out.”*

C. Application to Believers:

- Satan is out to destroy you spiritually – your testimony and witness for Christ (to neutralize this life-changing truth that you speak, that you represent and that you ARE)
- “...study how to answer...” in God-glorifying, God-honoring ways.
- IF Satan has entrapped you – repent, humble yourself, seek God’s forgiveness, seek the forgiveness of the person offended, get back up off your spiritual failure and boldly declare what God has done for you through Jesus Christ and what He will do for all sinners that humbly come to Him confessing their sins against Him and seeking His undeserved forgiveness, I Jn.1:9 (Jn.6:37)
- Set a guard at your mouth - Ps.141:3 *“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.”*