

9th Commandment: Other Sins of the Tongue

So in starting to talk about the 9th commandment, I started talking about the worst manifestation of it, the manifestation that was a picture of Satan in the Garden of Eden when he goes to Eve and asks if God really said this. He implied and he deceived Eve to think that the commandments that God had given were evil and that God was evil. He tore down the reputation of God and ever since then, that's what Satan and those who are his children do, they're slanderers. They try to destroy others. Instead of edifying they tear down. I talked last time about lying and how lying lips are an abomination before the Lord. That whenever we lie, we forget there is a God because there is a God in heaven who says He despised lying so if we ever think there is a situation that requires lying, or that it is the right thing to do, the only reason we can ever come to that conclusion is because we have forgotten that there is a God in heaven. Certainly lying is in falsehood, it's one of the most serious ways that we can break the 9th commandment. But there's more sins of the tongue than that that I think all fall under the category of the 9th commandment so I want to talk about some of those today. I want to make sure we understand how important it is that we control and constrain our tongue. **James 1:26 says, "If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."** Think about that, if you do not bridle your tongue, then all the practice of religion that you may have, none of it is pleasing to God. Your religion is useless. The other things you do, if you're seeking to worship Him, if you're seeking to serve Him, if you feed the poor, if you do all those things but you have no desire to control your tongue, then your religion is completely useless. Think about what it means to control your tongue. If you go on in James 3, what you find is that he is talking and saying that those who let freshwater and saltwater come out of their mouth, that this is being unbridled. It's not that you only say mean things, you can have a mixture, but that's still an unbridled tongue. The person that speaks too much, that's an unbridled tongue. The person that uses their tongue in ways that God didn't intend, and I am going to take the next two weeks to go over the righteous uses of the tongue, but the main thing to start with is just the idea that you have to control it. It is very easy to let your tongue be uncontrolled, to say whatever comes to your mind and that is not righteous. It is not righteous to, it says out of the foolishness of the heart the mouth speaks, and people take that use that to say whatever they want because it's in their heart. That's not what we are supposed to do, the tongue is supposed to be an instrument that you control, that you use to edify, that you use to bless and not to curse. What you use to strengthen and not to weaken. **Proverbs 10:19 says, "In the multitude of words, sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise."** We need to be careful about the number of words we speak because the more words we speak; it doesn't mean there isn't a place to speak words. Even in the passage this morning we hear how they spoke many words, they encouraged them with many words, he spoke until midnight and then continued to speak until the morning. We should also recognize that if you can't constrain your tongue, the best thing to do is to not say anything. If you can't constrain what comes out, don't let anything come out. Until you can learn to constrain your tongue, it's better to remain silent. If you're going to use your tongue to damage rather than to help, then the best thing to do is to remain silent. Don't add words and make your sin worse. Let's talk about some specific sins of the tongue other than lying in ways that an unconstrained tongue looks like. The first is that you curse with it. I don't mean that you sue profane language, although that certainly falls into it, but that also means that you try to damage with it. **Matthew 5:22, "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."** These are actually going down in severity but it ends with punishment which is more severe. If you say you fool, you're in danger of hell fire. If you just say about somebody something that is accurate, but all you're trying to do is damage them and hurt them with your words rather than bless them, it's not a rebuke if you're not hoping for the person to turn and to change. If all

you're doing is confronting someone in sin so you get the fun part of feeling superior to them by telling them they're in sin without doing anything to help them, without any hope or desire for them to repent, then you're cursing them instead of rebuking them. A rebuke is with a desire to move somebody so they turn and change their behavior instead of just cursing. Jesus, on the Sermon on the Mount, said that if all you do is curse them then you are in danger of hell fire. It's important how we use our tongues. Another way we can curse is more like how we usually use the term cursing. **Eph. 5:3-4, "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you is fitting among saints."** That's all the normal things that we think of, but Paul goes on in writing and says, **"neither filthiness nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."** So this should not even be named among you. Filthiness, that would be more like profanity where we think that using words that are not acceptable words, using words that instead of elevating the conversation, bring it lower. Our choice of words matters. Most of us tell our children not to use certain words and most of us don't use those words ourselves, but we live in a society where everybody knows what those words mean because people use them all the time. We should just recognize that's a sign of a society that has an unconstrained tongue. It's getting worse, I mean in the last 6 months, actually ever since Trump came into office, the use of profanity in the news media has skyrocketed. Why? Because the president thinks it's ok to swear so now everybody else thinks it's ok to swear. It's a very wrong headed thing and a very unchristian direction this country is going. We need to make sure we are not following in that same direction; we need to make sure we are watching our tongue. It's filthy words, they can even be accurate words, but there are words that have a connotation with them and you shouldn't use them without the proper context. To use a word out of context is usually how you use filthiness. Then it goes on and says foolish talking. This is talking that it's not cursing the person, but it's doing person to demean the person or other people, or even ourselves. We talk about just joking around, but there's talk that is edifying that can be humorous, but then there's also talk that is just trying to tear other people down. That is foolish talking. God says that should not even be named among you. How do you use your tongue? Do you use your tongue to edify or to tear down? You might say, 'Oh I was just saying it in jest', but there is a Proverb about that, 'I was just sporting'. That's not acceptable, that's not how we are supposed to behave. That doesn't mean that we can't be joyful, that we can't be comfortable with one another, but let's just make sure that we are not in the business of tearing other people down. Then coarse jesting would be potty humor, which is not acceptable in the eyes of God. God created people and the world in certain ways that demonstrates filthiness comes out of a man rather than going into a man. A lot of these things, teenage boys especially, make a lot of jokes about these things. We need to recognize that that is sin and adults should not be doing that. That is not righteous, that is not a good use of the tongue. And the opposite of it is giving thanks. When we do coarse jesting, when we do foolish talking, when we talk about filthiness, this is the opposite of giving thanks. Instead of being pleased with what God has done we are tearing down instead of building up. So the first thing that we should turn away from is cursing of brothers, cursing our sisters.

The next is tale bearing. We can think of tale bearing as lying but some tale bearing is lying. That's the term for slander, when you say false things about somebody. You can also say true things about people and be a tale bearer, you don't have to just lie to be a tale bearer. **Leviticus 19:16, says "You shall not go out as a tale bearer among your people nor should you take a stand against the life of your neighbor, I am the Lord."** We are not supposed to be gossips. That's important, that we recognize that we're not supposed to be going from one person to another, understand the core principle of gossip about building up pride and saying you know something about someone and telling other people so the other people think of you as always in the know, it's about pride. We are not supposed to go about as a tale bearer as one who just wants to tell other people things that they know. That doesn't mean that there aren't times to tell other people things that you know but if all you are doing is telling people things that

you know where it doesn't directly affect them, then it is tale bearing and it is sin. **Proverbs 11:13, "A tale bearer reveals secrets but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter."** Again, there is a place to expose so this isn't that, but a tale bearer reveals secrets but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals matter. Unless there is a purpose behind it, we are not to reveal things. Understand that Paul writes to Timothy and says that Demas left me because of his love for this present world. You can say he was a tale bearer but clearly we know he was not because this was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul had a reason for doing this, he had a reason to warn the churches and had a reason to tell us that other people that look like they are faithful ministers who are making great sacrifices for Christ may turn out to be lovers of the world and not lovers of God. 1 John says that if you love the world you do not love God. So there is place where we reveal secrets, but we reveal secrets because it's purposeful, there is a real intent to it, not just because we want to say things to people go, 'Oh wow, they know things'. That's when you become a tale bearer. The term tale bearer means rumor monger, you're going out and selling rumors, you're going out and selling stories that you have. You don't sell them for money usually, you sell them for recognition, you sell them for people wanting to hear from you and talk to you. You sell them for reputation, but this is somebody who is selling stories not because they are trying to be a blessing to the story is about or to the person that might be affected by it. Like when he says Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, he is trying to protect the church, that's not tale bearing. Tale bearing is when you are trying to get a reputation for yourself at the expense of other people. **Jeremiah 9:4, "Everyone takes heed to his neighbor and do not trust any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant and every neighbor will walk with slanderers."** That word 'slanderers' isn't well translated, that is actually the word for tale bearer, but tale bearer does not imply lies although it could include lies. Make sure you are not a neighbor who wants to walk with tale bearers. James talks about how if you take out the tender, if you take out the fuel, the first goes out. The way a tale bearer bears tales is because people want to hear, they're selling something but that also requires a buyer. Make sure you are not a buyer and that you don't want to hear something just so you have a neat tidbit about this person and you know something about them that they don't want to be known. This is a sign of the judgement on Judah is that every neighbor will walk with tale bearers instead of rejecting them they will embrace them. Make sure you are not a person who walks around and accepts tales from those who sell stories. Another idea along those same lines is **Proverbs 14:15, "The simple believes every word but the prudent considers well his steps."** When we hear those tales, we should be very careful about whether we believe them or not. Whether we are hearing things that are true, whether we should know this or not. There are some things that are important to be known but there are a lot of things that we shouldn't know about everybody else. We are all humans; we all have errors. It's kind to cover, love does cover a multitude of sins, but not in order to destroy the person, destroy the sinner, but it covers it because in those cases where to reveal it would be to destroy the person versus revealing it to cleanse the person. A faithful spirit considers every word, considers the truth of it, considers before they continue on saying it, they consider whether it's profitable to say it to anyone else. Just because you know something doesn't mean that it should always be repeated. A faithful spirit doesn't hide sin, it doesn't cause sin to fester, or to cause the works of darkness to be hidden so that nobody knows. It does reveal things, but it does them out of an act of love, it does it esteeming others better than themselves. A tale bearer is esteeming themselves better than others. If you want to know whether you should say something or not, the first thing you should consider is if it's going to be a blessing to the person who you are talking about or who you are talking to. I don't mean a blessing as in something they will want to hear, a juicy tidbit, I am saying it in the sense of warning someone of someone else's sin. That is not gossip or tale bearing. To tell someone who knows, we talk about tattling as if it's an evil thing. If an older sibling goes to tell a parent about something a younger sibling is doing wrong, that's not tale bearing. If the desire of the child is to turn the other child from their sin, that's not tale bearing. And then there is trying to get the attention away from them like when two are in the room and you are saying which one of you did this and they both go, "he did", that's tale bearing. That's not

doing it to be a blessing, that's doing it to get yourself out of trouble. We should actually not desire to conceal sin, that is serious, that needs to be dealt with. **Proverbs 26:20-22, "Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body."** If there is no hearer, the tale bearers disappear. When you have a society where every single one of your neighbors is a tale bearer, that's because they all listen to other tale bearers. The words of a tale bearer are like tasty trifles that go into the inmost belly. Don't think that you can listen to something about somebody else and not have it affect your opinion about them. Intellectually it's on the top of their mind and it goes to their inmost belly. You listen to things that shouldn't be said and out of a proper context. You listen to things without having two or three witnesses and all of a sudden these things, instead of being things that are being considered and properly dealt with, they become these things that are whispered into your ear and go into your inmost belly and effect how you think of other people. This is what talebearers do, not what Christians are supposed to do. Constrain your mouth and constrain your ears, this is what Christians do. The opposite would be an example in **Proverbs 16:27-28, "An ungodly man digs up evil and it is on his lips like a burning fire. A perverse man sows strife and whisper separates the best of friends."** The person who wants to find out evil so that they can spread it around, this is like a burning fire. They really want to talk to people. Make sure you aren't like this, when you find out a secret you're first thought shouldn't be 'who should I talk to about this?' If it's a secret about sin you're thought should be, 'is there someone I should tell this to to constrain evil?' it should never be 'who can I tell this to so I can say it for the sake of saying it'. When we use our words to sow strife, that's what we do right? You hear a story and go and tell somebody else that you will pit them against the other one. Make sure you don't stir strife or say things that don't create division. Again, there is proper division. When Paul walks into the synagogue and says that Jesus is the Messiah and had to suffer like this, Paul is not being a tale bearer. He spoke truth and there is a place to speak truth like what we are doing in Nigeria with Isaac. It is proper to expose the hidden works of darkness. It is a duty; this isn't tale bearing. This is trying to effect a change that really matters, this is trying to protect people. You don't always have to say 'let's cover up sin'. That's not the right answer, sin needs to be exposed, especially if there is a hope to stop it. A whisper separates the best of friends, that's the same picture of a tale bearer whispering that they know something about this person. They are dividing for the sake of division, not dividing for righteousness sake. There must be divisions, like what it says in 1 Corinthians, to show who is reprov'd. That is a valid reason speak about things and talk about things, but that doesn't mean that you can whisper and cause secrets by going behind peoples backs. That isn't what it means to expose sin. **Eccl. 7:21-22, "Also, do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you for many times also your own heart has known you have cursed others."** Part of the way you stop division is there are times when you just ignore it and assume that it will fade away. Like the servant who is cursing you, you recognize that you said things about other people that you shouldn't have said and you let it pass. There is a place where you know if they are tale bearing, but there is also a place where people have unconstrained tongues and you need to accept that and believe that. It can pass without being destructive and sometimes the most destructive thing you can do is to deal with someone who is saying something bad about you instead of just letting it go. Let's make sure we don't use tale bearing in a way to cover sin. Those who are children of the light walk in the light, they let their deeds be exposed. Those who walk in darkness and do not want to come into the light, they don't want their deed to be exposed. Let's make sure we recognize when there is serious sin involved, we have a duty to expose it and that's not tale bearing, that's loving. If you are doing it to blackmail the person, obviously it can be tale bearing and it can be sinful but a lot of times it's not and we need to make sure we have the right balance between the two. **Ephesians 5:8-13, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful**

works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.” And we are supposed to be the light of the world. So it is not to tale bear to expose evil deeds. When there are really evil deeds and the goal is to stop them, that’s vastly different than when people make a foolish mistake and people shout it from the rooftops and go to tell others. We all make foolish mistakes and that’s a lot different than when someone visits a pornographic, homosexual site. That’s not a foolish mistake, that’s a deliberate act that needs to be exposed. So when we think of tale bearing make sure we are putting it in the right light. There is real sin that is to be exposed and it is not to tale bear to expose that sin. That is the loving thing, if we think of the body and we think of that corruption in the body like it talks about in 1 Corinthians 5. If we don’t expose it or talk about it then it won’t be removed. Everybody in that church in 1 Corinthians 5, everybody knows that he has his father’s wife. Paul does not rebuke them for having talked about it, and so the person that found out never should have mentioned it to anyone else. That’s not Paul’s rebuke, his rebuke is that they knew about the evil and they didn’t do anything about it. They didn’t expose the hidden works of darkness. We need to recognize our responsibility, which if you misinterpret these other verses it looks like this is sin, but it is actually righteousness to expose evil deeds.

So moving on from tale bearing. Another sin of the tongue is complaining. TO use our tongue to grumble and complain is to sin. **Phil. 2:14-15, “Do all things without complaining and disputing that you may become blameless and harmless children of God without faith in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.”** We’re supposed to do all things without complaining and disputing. It’s really to think we have a position to grumble and complain, I almost put in there 1 Cor. 10:10 which talks about how God killed all these people in the desert because they grumbled and complained. It’s a serious sin to grumble and complain. God gave us tongues to use to bless and to edify, not to curse what God has done. When we grumble and complain what we are doing is cursing the sovereign God. We can curse other people by saying how terrible they are, we can curse them by our use of language, but when we grumble and complain we curse God. We’re saying ‘God, who are you to do this? Who are you to put me in this situation?’ If we want to be blameless we don’t grumble and complain. **Jude 14-16, “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men also saying, ‘Behold the Lord comes with 10,000 of his saints to execute judgement on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they committed in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’** What are these harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him? These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. That’s the harsh things that they say against God, they grumble and complain. Instead of saying, ‘God is good in everything He did, God has me where He has me for my good if I am a believer all things work together for good to them that are the called according to His purpose.’ When we grumble and complain we disregard Romans 8:28 or we are saying it doesn’t apply to us because we aren’t a believer. Just like when we lie we forget who God is, when we grumble and complain we forget who God is as well. We are speaking against Him when we grumble and complain. Understand the seriousness of using your tongue to grumble and complain. Now understand that it starts far before it manifests itself in the mouth. We grumble and complain against God in our hearts and in our minds before we do it with our mouth. So if all you do is stop saying it with your mouth, you’re not actually dealing with the problem. Instead, what you have to do is repent and accept that God knows what He is doing better than you do. You would not make a good god, I would not make a good god. God is perfect in everything that He does, every circumstance He puts you in, where it is so easy to think, ‘I hate this, why did this have to happen?’ The reality of what you should say is ‘God is wiser than I am’. That’s why it’s harsh words to grumble and complain, harsh words against God. And the last one, they mouthed great swelling words, flattering

people to gain advantage. That's another way ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. They made somebody out to be something they're not. They say things to people to puff them up and instead of edify. Now understand the person who's feeling weak and you go to him and you say 'great job' so that he is encouraged to continue, that's not great flattery words. But the person who thinks he did something well and you go to him and say, 'you did a really great job there', you can be puffing them up and flattering them even though it's the same words. It does have to do with how you expect the person to receive them. If you expect the person to receive those words, they might be true, but if you expect them to receive them to encourage them to persevere and to encourage them to do the right thing that is very different than saying those words so that they full of themselves. Instead of encouraging them to continue, you encourage them to think more highly of themselves than they ought to. One is flattery, the other is blessing. Note how close tale bearing is to flattery. **Prov. 20:19, "He who goes about as a tale bearer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips."** Tale bearing is a form of flattery. But flattery is broader. When the person comes up and says, 'Can you believe that so and so did such and such?' What they are saying is, 'You're so holy, you would never do it.' It's a form of flattery. Make sure that you don't listen to tale bearers. That's associating with one who flatters with his lips. The people who are good at flattery, they don't necessarily come straight out and say 'that's a wonderful job! That's the best ever!' A lot of times they just walk up and go, 'Wow, did you hear that? It's a shame his message was like that, yours are much better.' That's equally flattery and that's tale bearing at the same time. Make sure that you don't listen to tale bearing because it means your susceptible to flattery. **Psalm 5:8-10, "Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue. Pronounce them guilty, O God! Let them fall by their own counsels; Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, For they have rebelled against You."** Remember the person who flatters with their tongue, their throat is an open tomb, they're trying to kill people. Flattery leads to death, not necessarily physical death, but spiritual death because you start to think you're somebody that you're not. Don't desire flattery. Flattery is very destructive, the person that flatters, they're way is destruction. Their heart is destruction. To flatter with their tongue is a way to bring people into their trap. Make sure you don't flatter with your tongue. Make sure you don't listen to flattery or want to hear flattery. It is about their throat being an open tomb. **Romans 16:17-18, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."** Again, these people that are so destructive and cause division and offenses. Paul says the right response to them is to avoid them and have no contact with them. Why? Because by smooth words and flattering speech, they deceive the hearts of the simple. The person who smoothly tries to win you, the person who flatters you, especially those who don't do it in an overt way, but do it in a subtle way where you want to believe they're right. That's the subtlety of flattery when they say something and you want to believe that it's true, that's why it's so destructive. 'This is the best meal I have ever eaten' and the cook wants to hear that and believe it. Make sure your heart is not filled with the desire for flattery because that's how you get deceived and sucked in by deceivers.

Another way we can sin with our tongue is to teach men false things, not that we are lying to ourselves, but when we think things that are contrary to the Scriptures and then go and teach that to others. That's a serious sin of the tongue. **Matthew 5:19, "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."** The one who looks at the Scriptures and then teaches a perversion of it, that's misusing the tongue and using it in a way that's supposed to be edifying God, but they're not edifying God. The person who teaches false things and false

commandments, or teaches men that it's ok to break the commandments, that's one of the most serious misuses of the tongue. That's where Christ said it was better for them to have a millstone around their neck and be thrown into the pond. When we teach things we need to be very careful that we are teaching truth.

Then the last group which is idle words. This is also another serious misuse of the tongue. **Matthew 12:36, "But I say to you that for every idle word men will speak, they will give an account of it in the day of judgement."** When we just say frivolous things, or say things without a purpose or goal, when we say things without any useful end, every one of those will be brought into judgement. God doesn't say we should just speak. This is one of the reason that in a multitude of words sin is not lacking, because if those words are not to an end, if they aren't for a purpose, then there is going to be sin involved because it is sinful for them to be purposeless. It doesn't need to be slander, or gossip, or lying, or misleading, it doesn't need to be flattery. If all it is is meaningless or speaking for the sake of speaking, that's a sin of the tongue. Every idle word will be brought into judgement. It's tied to another one, **1 Timothy 5:13**, which we talked about when we talked about theft, **"And besides they learned to be idle, wandering about from house to house. Not only idle, but gossips and busybodies saying things that they ought not."** If you're not working with your hands, then too often you end up working with your tongues. I don't think we should just think of this with actual spoken words because I look now and ever since this Nigeria stuff has come up, I have had to get on Facebook a lot more. Man, are there a lot of idle words on Facebook. Words with no meaning, words with no purpose, words that don't matter. Better than Twitter probably, but make sure you're not wasting your time on idle words whether they are written or spoken. If they are without purpose, if they're without edifying or strengthening or to build up, God has given us much work to do. If we spend that time by writing cute little messages on Facebook, it's still sin, it's still idle words. There's a whole lot of homeschooling mom blogs and you should be pretty careful about that because there's always been gossips and just because you say you are blogging about this to help people, too often they just end up gossiping. Make sure your words aren't idle. **Proverbs 15:1-2, "A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness."** Those are idle words, be sure you don't pour out foolishness. There's a lot of young people who are trying to express their opinion and to say how brilliant they are and how knowledgeable and understanding. You go to these blogs and you have these young guys out there who are just trying to act like they are so brilliant and have such knowledge and its really just fools pouring forth foolishness. They really don't understand, they don't understand the world, they don't understand the things in the world. It's kind of like the bit movement in the homeschooling community with all these young guys making films with nothing to say. It was just fools pouring forth foolishness. Make sure you have something worthwhile to say or don't bother saying it. Make sure you have wisdom, knowledge and understanding so that your words aren't idle words, they are useful words. **Ephesians 4:15-16, "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."** That's the opposite of idle words, words that are building up, words that are about strengthening the body, words about being a blessing to the church, words about the kingdom of God, words about righteousness. There are many good words to speak and we need to recognize that our words are supposed to be about that, edifying itself in love. So as I went through these things I want to close with these thoughts. I want to start with **James 1:26 says, "If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."** When we think about tale bearing, when we think about cursing, when we think about flattery, when we think about grumbling and complaining, when we think about false teaching, understand if you don't make any effort to control these things, and James also says the perfect man perfectly controls his tongue

and none of us are perfect so we are all going to do these at times, but if you make no effort to bridle your tongue, if you're making no effort to avoid flattery, if you're making no effort to avoid complaining, if you're making no effort to avoid tale bearing, if you're not bridling your tongue all the rest of the things you do that you think make you so religious, they're worth absolutely nothing. He deceives his own heart; his religion is useless. Make sure your religion isn't useless, watch how you use your tongue. **Matthew 12:37, "For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned."** Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. Your words indicate where your heart is with God. All of us have a mix, but God can look at them and say your words are about edification or your words are about destruction. And He knows how to weigh them in a balance, and so that's a question all of us should ask ourselves. Are our words, words of edification or are they words of destruction? Because if we are truly seeking eternal life, seeking God, then our words are going to be words of edification. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned. God can look at our words and know the state of our hearts. Make sure you are looking at your words because by your words you can know the state of your own hearts as well. Let me close with **Psalm 34:11-14, "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it."** Doing all these things, as we work through these commandments it's easy for us to think there are lesser commandments. I don't think we should think of them as lesser commandments. We think of murder being worse than adultery, adultery worse than theft, theft worse than bearing false witness, bearing false witness and worse than covetousness. Instead we should see them as a path from one to another. You open the door with how you use your tongue. If you desire life and love many days, if you want to see eternal life, keep your tongue from evil. All those other things will flow if we don't keep our tongue from evil. Seek peace and pursue it. As we think of those commands, the first commandment says that God is the center of all things and the last commandments is not to make yourself the center of all things. All the other one's flow in the path between those two points. When we lie with our lips we forget that there is a God. When we grumble and complain we forget that there is a God. When we break the 9th commandment we are forgetting there is a God. Let's remember with how we use our tongue there is a God who rules in heaven and by our words we will be justified and by our words we will be condemned.