

~~**Comment:** Unless we believe the gospel, we will be driven in all we do, whether obeying or disobeying, by pride (“self-love”) or fear (“of damnation”). Mere moral effort without the gospel may restrain the heart but cannot truly change the heart. It “jury rigs” the evil of the heart to produce moral behavior out of self-interest. It would be possible to use fear and pride as ways to motivate a person to be honest, but since fear and pride is also the root for lying, it is only a matter of time before such a thin tissue collapses. Luther was right. If you are obeying the law without deep joy in your acceptance in Christ, you are not *loving God with all your heart*. You are not obeying God *for God*. You are being moral so that you can put God in your debt, so he owes you a comfortable life. You are being moral so that you can feel secure in your uprightness. You are being moral in the service of self-salvation, out of the fear and pride that arise without an identity built on Christ in the gospel.~~

~~**Other kinds of word-sins and what they reveal**~~

1. Which of these three kinds of “mouth-sin” is the biggest problem for you? In which area do you struggle most?

- **TALKING ABOUT MYSELF.** Defensiveness rather than taking criticism graciously. Bragging rather than focusing on and complementing others. (cf. Gal. 6:14 *“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord...”*)
- **TALKING ABOUT OTHERS.** Talking unkindly about others more often than affirming and sincerely praising. Harsh or sarcastic when giving criticism. (cf. Gal. 5:15- *“biting and devouring one another”*)
- **TALKING ABOUT LIFE.** Complaining and murmuring more than expressing gratitude and praise. More emphasis on the injustices rather than the mercies of life. (cf. Gal.5:22- *“the fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, patience...gentleness.”*)

2. Review the following quote from Richard Lovelace:

“The faith that surmounts the evidence and is able to warm itself at the fire of God’s love, instead of having to steal love and self-acceptance from other sources, is actually the root of holiness....”

Without a deep grasp of the gospel, we believe that salvation/happiness/blessing depends conditionally on something we are or do. Thus everyone builds their identity on something besides Jesus. **Review one psychologist’s categories of four basic ways in which people seek meaning and self-acceptance.** Each of the following four things can become something we depend on to establish our adequacy and worth instead of depending on Jesus.

<u>What We Seek</u>	<u>Price We Will Pay</u>	<u>Greatest Nightmare</u>	<u>Others Often Feel</u>	<u>Problem Emotion</u>
COMFORT (<i>Privacy, lack of stress, freedom</i>)	Reduced productivity	Stress, demands	Hurt	Boredom
APPROVAL (<i>Affirmation, love, relationship</i>)	Less independence	Rejection	Smothered	Cowardice
CONTROL (<i>Self-discipline, certainty, standards</i>)	Loneliness; spontaneity	Uncertainty	Condemned	Worry
POWER (<i>Success, winning, influence</i>)	Burdened; responsibility	Humiliation	Used	Anger

3. Now look at the circumstances surrounding your typical mouth sins. Answer this question: “When I [commit this particular sin], what is it that I am after? What do I feel I must have for self-acceptance?”

(a) If you need to defend yourself against criticism, where are you “warming yourself?” (*Is it to get comfort, approval, control, power or something else?*)

(b) If you need to run other people down or make them look bad, where are you “warming yourself?” (*Is it to get comfort, approval, control, power or something else?*)

(c) If you cannot be grateful and happy unless life is going according to your plan, where are you “warming yourself?” (*Is it to get comfort, approval, control, power, or something else?*)

4. Imagine how you could draw on your hope and standing in Christ at these moments and get control of your tongue?