

Sunday, November 22, 2009—The Weight of Our Words—Speaking Out For Number One: Confronting Pride, Boasting, Flattery, and Exaggeration

## **Introduction**

- In last week's study titled, *Out of the Abundance of the Heart* we looked at how what we say is a reflection of the condition of our heart.
- In doing so we looked at three specific types of hearts: The Proud Heart, The Angry Heart, and the Fearful Heart
- This morning I want to look more specifically at the proud heart and three types of evil speaking that steam from the proud heart: Boasting, Flattery, and Exaggeration
- Looking out for number one has become a way of life for many people. Self-fulfillment, self-elevation, and self-advancement are priorities that affect our behavior. We can make such concepts sound like modern thought and well-spun philosophies, yet they are little more than alternative forms of pride.
- At its core, pride desires to make self the most important person in the universe. When Lucifer was judged it was because of pride.
  - Isaiah 14:12-15
  - Job 41:34
- Pride takes orders only from within, and it seeks to accumulate wealth, status, fame, and glory. It seeks to control others at any cost and to accomplish its own end regardless of the price. The only friendships that matter are those that promote oneself.
- We all possess and ego. None of us would function without one. We all need enough ego to care about success, how we look, and how we feel about ourselves. Ego simply needs a control factor.
- At least three sins of the tongue are revealed by our unchecked egos. They are boasting, flattery, and exaggeration.

## **Boasting**

- Boasting is a relatively popular social sport. The boaster is the guy who keeps the conversation circulating around himself and his accomplishments.
- I Corinthians 6:19-20—the boaster aborts the very purpose of redemption by bring glory to themselves rather than giving glory to God.
- There are three pointed descriptions of those who boast presented in Scripture.

- The Inflated Zero
  - Philippians 2:3—“*vainglory*” comes from two Greek words meaning empty and glory. Vain glory is literally the glorification of emptiness—the promotion of our “zeroness.”
  - Romans 7:18—God says that our sin nature resides in our flesh and is therefore not capable of producing anything good.
  - Isaiah 64:6—even our finest efforts aside from Christ working in us have the value of filthy rags.
  - When I bring glory to myself, it glories of my emptiness. No matter how big my zero is, it’s still zero. When I boast of myself, it is nothing more than the enlargement of my emptiness. It is vain conceit. My life, my works, and all that I am take on meaning only through Christ.
  - Galatians 2:20—when something good is done in me, it is of Christ and not of me.
  
- The Wandering Quack
  - Do you remember the guys from old western movies selling some elixir that they claimed would heal all sorts of physical problems.
  - James 4:16—the word translated “*boastings*” literally means braggart talk. A braggart boasts about things that he can’t control and promises more than he can deliver.
  - James 4:13-15
  
- Embezzlers of God’s Glory
  - One of the lowest forms of egomania is taking credit when it belongs to someone else. Giving credit where credit is due reflects a basic tenet of proper speech. It also reflects why God considers boasting such a serious offense.
  - I Corinthians 9:19-20
  - Psalm 106:33—upon further investigation it turns out that Moses did more than just strike the rock when God told him to speak to it.
  - Numbers 20:10—“must we fetch water,” Moses took credit for what God was going to do.
  - Acts 12:23

- Ephesians 2:9—I Corinthians 1:29—tells us why salvation is by grace through faith. That no flesh should glory in his presence.
- It is not surprising that when God's word lists the characteristics of godless people, boasters often find their places in the list.
  - Romans 1:30
  - II Timothy 3:2
- Psalm 94:1-4
- Psalm 34:1-3—if we boast we should boast in God.

### **Flattery**

- Few skills of the tongue are more manipulative, more ego-serving than flattery. This is the hypnotic power of the tongue to seduce and to conquer.
- Flattery is the act of placing someone in debt to us by verbally commending some action, virtue, or involvement in someone's life. Flattery differs from genuine praise or compliment because of its motive—it is a compliment shared to manipulate another for personal gain.
- There are at least four manipulative abilities within the scope of the flatterer's tongue:
  - Attention--some people are so starved for attention that they will use undue adulation to get it.
  - Solicit Compliments--some offer compliments hoping to receive one in return.
  - Seduction—immoral, unethical, cruel, and damaging partnerships have often been sealed in a flatterer's parlor.
  - Gain Favor—true favor comes by earning another's respect.
- Psalm 12:1-4
- Psalm 5:9—flattery is a reflection of a destructive spirit. When we seek to control or use others for our benefit, we begin to destroy them. A flatterer destroys the object of their flattery by placing the potential of pride and the snare of seduction in his or her path.
- Proverbs 29:5

## **Exaggeration**

- Exaggeration is nothing more than lying about details to make information more sensational, interesting, or manipulative.
- Exaggeration erodes trust and credibility, two building blocks for successful relationships.

## **The Answer to Pride**

- Some might think that the answer to pride is simply humility. Humility can also be a source of pride.
- Colossians 2:18—voluntary humility is the kind of humility that is humble and proud of it.
- True humility puts God in his rightful place. When we acknowledge God as number one we can stop trying so hard to fill the position ourselves. The measure of your humility can be determined by God's place in your life.
- The sooner we learn to yield ourselves to God's number-one position the better off we will be.
- Exodus 12:29-32
- I Peter 5:5-6—since humility taps into God's strength it allows us to be assertive, bold, and courageous as long as we maintain a tenacious loyalty to serve him.
- A person who makes God number one will replace pride-centered words with expressions that:
  - Reject unrighteous suggestions and claims
  - Worship and praise God for who He is, not just for what He has done.
  - Speak God's truth in the face of rebellion and error.
  - Encourage others to yield to God's rightful place.
- Putting God in His proper places also allows us to relate more effectively with each other. The vertical response of humility (to God) should result in a number of horizontal responses (to others), including:
  - Ephesians 5:25-33—husbands responding to the needs of their wives
  - Ephesians 5:22-24—wives responding to the headship of their husbands
  - Ephesians 6:4—parents responding to the needs of their children
  - Ephesians 6:1—children responding to the authority of their parents
  - Ephesians 6:5-9—proper attitudes about work
- Philippians 2:3-6

## **The God-Made Man**

- We often hear praise for the “self-made man.” Part of the American dream seems to be the ability to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps.
- Self-sufficiency breeds pride. God-sufficiency, on the other hand, breeds a grateful, worshiping spirit.
- II Corinthians 12:7-10—humility comes from submission to God’s written word in our lives.
- Yielding to the authority of God’s Word in our lives will positively affect our speech. We will:
  - Give God credit for what we are, what we have, and what we have accomplished.
  - Give God credit for the good we see in others.
  - Reflect spirits of gratefulness to God in every circumstance.