

Is That What You Meant to Say? By Steve Klein

An insurance agent was writing a policy for a cowboy. "Have you ever had any accidents?" the agent asked. "No, not really," replied the cowboy. "A horse threw me off and kicked me in the ribs once, and I got bit a couple of times by a rattlesnake, but that's about it." "Don't you call those accidents?" demanded the agent. "Oh no," said the cowboy, "They did them things on purpose!"

It occurs to me that many things that appear to be accidents, or that we pretend are accidents, are actually intended outcomes. Sin is seldom if ever accidental. We may say that we "didn't mean to do it" or "didn't mean to say it," but, most of the time, that isn't really true. And, even if we didn't mean to do it or say it, surely the tempter meant for us to. Righteousness isn't an accident either. Jesus didn't accidentally live a sinless life. It took purpose of heart to resist temptation and do right at every turn.

Barnabas encouraged Christians that "with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (Acts 11:23). Paul commended Timothy because he had "carefully followed" Paul's "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance" (2Tim. 3:10). The life of a Christian is truly a purpose-driven life. It is lived with a sense of purpose, by those who choose to do right on purpose.

This applies to every aspect of our lives, including our speech. We will not say the right things accidentally. We must choose to say them. In Psalm 17:3 David wrote, "You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." David was right before God because he had determined to control his mouth. We must also control our speech if we are to be acceptable to God. The Bible says that "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" (James 1:26).

We are to be thoughtful and purposeful with everything we say. Proverbs 15:28 states that, "The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil." The righteous man doesn't just say whatever comes into his mind. He "studies how to answer!" The New Testament commands, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

Yet how often do we just talk without thinking about the effect of our words? In the Book of Job, Job's three friends had a lot to say to him that was pretty useless. Of them and their words Job says, "I have heard many such things; Miserable comforters are you all! Shall words of wind have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer?" (Job 16:2-3). One paraphrased translation of this has, "I've had all I can take of your talk. What a bunch of miserable comforters! Is there no end to your windbag speeches? What's your problem that you go on and on like this?" (MSG). Job's friends, though intelligent men, had not chosen to speak words that would have a positive effect.

Let us all give thought to the impact of our words. Words are powerful, and they will not be a power for good unless we purpose to make them so. Let's do our best to make sure that what we say is what we mean to say, and that what we mean to say is good. (Via The Bulletin of the Church of Christ at New Georgia, March 29, 2009)

Who Said We Must Be Broadminded?

There is no room for broad-mindedness in the chemical laboratory. Water is composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. The slightest deviation from that formula is forbidden.

There is no room for broad mindedness in music. The skilled director will not permit his first violin to play even so much as one-half note off the written note, chord, and key.

There is no room for broad-mindedness in the mathematics classroom. Neither geometry, calculus, nor trigonometry allow for any variation from exact accuracy, even for "old time's sake." The solution of the problem is either right or it is wrong (no tolerance there).

There is no room for broad-mindedness in biology. One varying result out of a thousand experiments will invalidate an entire theory.

There is no room for broad-mindedness on the athletic field. The game is to be played according to the rules with no favors shown for "charity's sake."

There is no room for broad-mindedness in the garage. The mechanic there says the piston rings must fit the cylinder walls within one-thousandth part of an inch. Even between friends there cannot be any variation if the motor is to run smoothly.

How then shall we expect that broad-mindedness shall rule in the realm of Christianity and morals? He that forsakes the truth of God, forsakes the God of truth. (Author Unknown)

One Must Go Into the Water

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)

Many object to baptism for the remission of sins by saying, "There's no power in the water." Jesus healed a blind man by anointing his eyes and saying, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." (John 9:6-7) The blind man did not object by saying, "There's no power in the water." He knew the power was of the Lord and he had to obey the Lord to receive the blessing. He promptly obeyed and received his sight. Likewise, there is no power in the water of baptism. The power is of the Lord, but one must go to the water to receive the blessing.

A Moments Wisdom

If you think it is alright to tell white lies you will soon grow color-blind.
Bad habits are like a comfortable bed; easy to get into, but hard to get out of.
By the way some people talk, one would infer that they really enjoy poor health.
The abundant life too often is smothered in the abundance of things.
If you want to conquer your weakness, you must not indulge or excuse it.
How few are our real wants, and how vast are our imaginary ones!