

## Choose Your Next Words Wisely!

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### What is Your Name Again?

Learning people's names has been very important to me. Although my memory is very limited, I still strive to call and learn everyone by their correct name. Have you ever accidentally called someone by the incorrect name? Of course, you have! This is something we all have done, and when you realize it, I always feel so embarrassed and troubled. Why is that? It is not just the fact that you were incorrect, but you do not want your mistake to hurt the one who heard your error.

### What Does it Mean to Speak as Oracles of God?

As Christians, we should feel the same way about God's word. We should also desire to speak correctly. In fact, the Scripture encourages it. "If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God..." (1 Peter 4:11 NKJV). In this passage, the word oracles, "λόγιον" in its original Greek, can also be translated as "an *utterance* (of God):—oracle."<sup>1</sup> So Peter is encouraging us Christians that when we speak, let us speak as God speaks. This would mean we should avoid speaking or saying things God did not say or using our vocabulary in a way God did not. This incorrect way of speaking spreads disunity, strife, and confusion.

### Can We Divide the Word Incorrectly?

There are incorrect ways to use Scripture. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul instructs Timothy to rightly divide the word, and in doing so, he will be presenting himself approved to God. This also reveals that we can incorrectly divide the word. So, it is very possible to misinterpret the Scripture and then teach it. This has caused a great amount of error to be spread across the world. So to avoid this ourselves, let us mirror Jesus, "...Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak" (John 12:50). Jesus spoke just as Peter mentioned in 1 Peter 4:11, as the oracle of God. Jesus, as we should also do, did not usurp His authority over the Father by speaking incorrectly.

### A Consequence of Error

Just as we hope not to hurt someone with our mistaken use of vocabulary when we call someone by the wrong name, we can really harm someone's soul by speaking or teaching errors. This is to be a huge concern for everyone! Teachers are cautioned in Scripture to guard their tongues (James 3). So when it comes to how we speak, let us, as those before us during the Restoration Movement encouraged, "Where the Bible Speaks, We Speak; Where the Bible Is Silent. We Are Silent" and "Let us Do Bible Things in Bible Ways and Call Bible Things by Bible Names." These slogans are not Scripture, but as the Scripture has encouraged, these slogans express a Scriptural idea and avoid the corrupt use of vocabulary. Let us not hurt someone with our words by speaking not as oracles of God.

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<sup>1</sup> James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009) 45.