

Babble and Prattle

I did my first series of teaching on this topic in the late 1980s. It made no impression on anyone's lives except myself. It's time to teach on it again as our King fine-tunes us for our upcoming assignments.

For myself, I have become more and more careful over time with what I say and how much I say. These days, like Jesus, I follow this Kingdom Maxim:

MAXIM: **Be slow to speak and quick to listen.**

Jesus said a number of things about our speech which can be instilled down to; 'Watch what you say'. Here's a couple of his teachings.

Matthew 5:37 (AMPC¹) – *Let your Yes be simply Yes, and your No be simply No; anything more than that comes from the evil one.*

Matthew 5:37 (TPT²) – *A simple 'Yes' or 'No' will suffice. Anything beyond this springs from a deceiver.*³

You see here that we aren't to really affirm what we are saying emphatically, beyond a simple "Yes" or "No".

Matthew 6:7 (NET) – *When you pray, do not **babble** repetitiously like the Gentiles, because they think that by their many words they will be heard.*

This relates to why I call Christian prayer methods, 'God bothering'. A lot of words and emotion is used to twist God's arm to do what it wanted. I used to do it, so I know what I'm talking about.

The word Jesus used for 'babble' in the Greek rendition is *battologeō* (βαττολογέω), meaning to 'prate tediously' and used to describe 'vain repetitions'. 'Prate' is where we get our word 'prattle' from, which means to 'talk at length in a foolish or inconsequential way' and 'to utter by chattering or babbling.'⁴

What else has Holy Spirit revealed about babbling and prattling?

1 Timothy 1:6 (AMPC) – *But certain individuals have missed the mark on this very matter [and] have wandered away into vain arguments and discussions and purposeless talk.*

In context this is talking about church teachers who move away from sound Kingdom teaching and follow the Greek method of oratory on theological things. However, it emphasises the need to monitor our speech as we can be deceived in the same way an move down the path of the pre-eminence of theological understanding. Deviation always starts with a small shift away from the teaching of the Kingdom which comes to us from the Spirit.

1 Timothy 5:13 (NIV) – *Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to.*

1 Timothy 5:13 (TPT) – *Those widows who go around from house to house as busybodies are only learning to be lazy, making their situation even worse by talking too much, gossiping, and speaking*

1 – Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

2 – The Passion Translation

3 – TPT footnote: As translated from the Aramaic. See Eccl. 5:4-7.

classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A37&version=TPT#en-TPT-4750

4 – www.dictionary.com/browse/prattle

things they shouldn't. They become far too obsessed with empty things that will not bear good fruit.

This relates to the propensity of women to gossip and talk about things that are irrelevant to the Kingdom. This is also reinforced here:

1 Timothy 3:11(AMP) – *Women must likewise be worthy of respect, not malicious gossips, but self-controlled, [thoroughly] trustworthy in all things.*

What do we draw from this NT knowledge? Keep a tight rein on what you say. This can be better stated as a Kingdom standard like this:

MAXIM: Judge what needs to be communicated and say no more.

This is why self control and being Spirit-led is so important. If we don't use these 2 tools we babble and prattle, which are not Kingdom styles of speech.

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