

- ◆ We often ignore HOW we speak to others.
- ◆ We justify turning speech into weapons of savage destruction.
- ◆ We give little thought to how our speech will come back to haunt us as we stand before God (Matthew 12:36-37).

Before we can speak with the accent of Christ, we must begin by confessing to God that our lips are unclean! And, believe it or not, there are some who think they have no need to make this confession! And their lips remain unclean and they will appear trembling before God but it will be too late to change their eternity.

The Power to Change Your Accent

The power that changed Isaiah's unclean lips is available to mankind (Ephesians 1:19-20). "Woe is me!" is changed to rejoicing and "your guilt is taken away" (Isaiah 6:7). The grace of God provides forgiveness for the penitent heart. The forgiven is ready to go out with a NEW speech pattern and NEW vocabulary and share the good news of God's grace and mercy! (1 John 1:7-9).

The Accent Change Brings "NEW"

You have NEW relationships (Ephesians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20)

You have a NEW point of view (2 Corinthians 5:16; John 8).

You have a NEW community (1 Corinthians 1:10).

The Accent Challenge

Changing speech habits is difficult. Old speech patterns cannot be changed by mortal methods. BUT the power of God can change the heart and as they speak from the heart, all around them will be amazed at the transformation that has occurred (Acts 4:13).

In the beginning God created man and woman to communicate powerfully, lovingly, and constructively. In Christ, God gives the recreated man and woman the option to choose to communicate with the tone, body language and vocabulary that brings a blessing and not a barrier!

In the following lessons we will examine specific ways that the new creation in Christ speaks from the heart with the accent of Christ!



Lesson Two: An Awesome Accent

Dalraida Church of Christ

John L. Kachelman, Jr.

"Just say, 'Shibboleth.' But he said, 'Sibboleth,' for he was not prepared to pronounce it correctly" (Judges 12:6).

Language Accents

One of the most interesting aspects of speech is "accents." In every language there are many sub-sections that are identified by geographical boundaries.

This interesting cultural phenomenon is highlighted in Judges 12:6. Inspiration refers to language identification. This historic event has become a metaphor in our contemporary society. In contemporary society "sibboleths" define who belongs to a group and who does not. Wartime passwords utilize this biblical principle.

Those who travel are aware of this. It is experienced by those who relocate to a different area in our nation.

Such speech peculiarities identified Peter, even though he vigorously denied it (Matthew 26:73).

The Accents of the Christian's Speech

Consider how "accent" is used in the decorative-arts of "something that emphasizes or highlights" the attractiveness of an object. Some are gifted with the ability to take a mundane object and add accents so that it is transformed into an amazing result. Attractiveness is highlighted by the accents added. The value of the common is skillfully accentuated and magnified.

This frames a significant fact for the Christian (Luke 6:45). Christians are to accentuate the gospel (1 Timothy 2:9; Titus 2:10) and one of the critical ways

to do this is by “speaking from the heart.”

The Christian must speak with an accent that instantly distinguishes him from the world and accentuates the attractiveness of the Church/Redemption/Salvation! (1 Thessalonians 2:4).

A Christian’s Accent is...

There is a unique “Christian” vocabulary that many have learned and are instantly offended when that vocabulary is not spoken. Such includes: We don’t “join the Church”; preachers are not “pastors”; we do not “tithe”; etc. When someone fails to use the right vocabulary words then irritation is voiced and at times voiced in a degrading, disrespectful manner. We must be careful using an accent that is based upon man and not God! The critical question asks: “What does God expect our communication accent to be?”

The Body Language Accent

We communicate with body language (gestures; facial expressions; posture; etc.). This principle of non-verbal communication also applies to our congregational life. The Church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23; Colossians 1:18) and we must speak the appropriate “body language.” What is the distinctive “body language” characterizing the congregation? And, HOW am I communicating body language in this congregation that will glorify God and respect His commands?

We are obligated to make sure the accent of our congregational language is acceptable to God. Our congregational “body language” must reflect loyalty and commitment to God (Psalm 19:14). If we are speaking according to Luke 6:45, we will not cower because of intimidation; we will not be silence by timidity.

Christ’s disciples are “peculiar” (1 Peter 2:9 KJV). They are different. They have values and lifestyles that are considered “strange” and “out of fashion” (1 Peter 4:4). Christians accent their speech because they are a people possessed by God—they belong to God (1 Peter 2:9). The Christian is to have a radically distinctive accent different from those in a pagan society that disrespects God (Mark 10:43).

- ◆ The world does not set the Christian’s behavior patterns (Romans 12:2).
- ◆ The world does not shape the Christian’s point of view (2 Corinthians 5:16).
- ◆ The worldly person does not get a pass from the devout Christian (Ephesians 5:11).

God’s message is clear—the Christian’s accent distinguishes him as different from the world around us!

The Source of the Accent

The Christian’s accent comes from God and not the world. God is the source of accents and beliefs. We must be careful that the standard for our actions is God’s Truth (the Bible). We cannot use the people around us as the standard for our accent in body language. Where do we look for the absolutes in daily living? Where do we find boundaries for values that distinguish...right from wrong, essentials from dispensables; the primary from the trivial; the important from the urgent?

When we look to God and His Word, instead of societal mores, we will find our way past moral relativism to godly courage. And we will speak with boldness! (Ephesians 6:19-20). The accent of the Christian’s speech that is spiritually healthy, ethically godly, communicating true spiritual truth comes from Christ’s Words (Hebrews 12:2; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; Colossians 3:8-12).

Christians must cultivate their distinctive accent. They must be identified by speaking wholesome words, encouraging words, thankful words, and words boldly speaking God’s truth. This is the distinctive “body language” and identifies as being “all members of one body” (Ephesians 4:25).

The Beginning of the Accent

“I love the southern accent and wish I talked like that!” Some accents are not genuine. They mimic but are not true. Some have been trained to speak without a specific accent, but it is not true—it is all theatrics! Sadly, some professing to be Christians have the vocabulary but it is all theatrics! Insincerity. A pretense to deceive.

The wonderful news is that the accent of one speaking from the heart is available to “whosoever will come” to the Lord! Becoming a Christian enables you to speak with this accent. (Colossians 3:17). There will be a thorough change when one changes citizenship from the world to the Church. (Colossians 1:13).

One is recreated, born again, and transferred after obeying the gospel. As a consequence, he has a new language; a new native tongue; a new vocabulary; a pattern of speech that conforms to the speech pattern of the Son of God! Speaking from the heart means that we will sound like Jesus Christ—we will speak contemporary English with a committed Christian accent!

The Accent of Unclean Lips

Isaiah 6:5, “Woe to me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips.” When Isaiah stood before God it is significant that it was his SPEECH that was his most painful awareness. The impurity of his speech exposed the impurity of his heart (Luke 6:45). This is a sobering realization. Many are “good” Christians, but they will share Isaiah’s plight.