

8. As the verse continues, we learn the source of this iniquity, the noun, **בֶּטֶן** (*beten*). Literally it refers to the “belly, womb, or inner body.” However, the application here is figurative for the soul:

The Inner Man. The *beten* also represents the “inner man,” in which thoughts are stored up and from which they issue forth. Man is advised to keep the words of the wise in his *beten* (LXX *kardía*), having them continually ready for a proper time when they may be spoken (Proverbs 22:18). The *ruach*, “spirit,” which carries forth these words, is also in the *beten*. Evil thoughts can also be stored up in the *beten* (Job 15:35), but if a man has spoken well his *beten* is satisfied (Proverbs 18:20).⁵

9. From the context of Job 15:35, we discern this word’s reference is to the stream of consciousness in the soul. It is from that inventory that the last two words of the verse come into view.
10. The first is the Hiph‘il imperfect, active voice of the verb, **בֶּטֶן** (*beten*) which means this action is caused by the person’s free will and is a habitual behavior pattern.
11. If this is not bad enough the verse ends with the resultant impact of this action, the noun, **מִרְמָה** (*mirmah*): “deception; the intentional misleading of someone by distorting or withholding the truth.”

Job 15:35 They conceive the idea to instigate quarrels that give birth to iniquity, therefore their soul’s stream of consciousness keeps on preparing to deceive.
(EXT)

12. All the better English translations interpret the verse’s first verb, **הָרָה** (*harah*): “to conceive.” The NIV and NET Bibles translate it, “conceive trouble,” while the NASB and KJV choose “conceive mischief.”
13. Both “trouble” and “mischief” translate the noun, **עָמַל** (*‘amal*), which carries the idea of instigating quarrels.
14. This problem is approached in several ways in Scripture. Let’s use five illustrations to characterize the sins of the tongue instigated under the phrase, **עָמַל הָרָה** (*harah ‘amal*): “conceive ... quarrels or trouble.”

⁵ David N. Freedman and J. Lundbom, “בֶּטֶן,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, rev. ed., eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 2:96, 97.



1. Believers who have a tendency toward legalism, but have not acquired grace orientation, can be very self-righteous and even get involved in crusader arrogance. This is often revealed in their desire to gossip about grace-oriented believers.
2. Some believers view themselves as mature Christians based on their adherence to cultural lifestyles, i.e., establishment norms and standards. This approach imposes human viewpoint over biblical absolutes. Such types often criticize the pastor who teaches doctrinal principles that occasionally challenge cultural standards.
3. A combination of illustrations 1 and 2 can result in a legalistic inventory of ideas whose applications are motivated by erroneous working objects that produce dead works by which they criticize other believers for their failures to comply.
4. Believers who may show up at church but either are not interested in serious study of the Word of God or, on the other hand, attend happy-clappy churches who entertain rather than earnestly teach the Word. Emotionalism trumps serious Bible study with accompanying criticism of those who prefer the latter.
5. Those who are inconsistent in their spiritual growth live their Christian lives out of fellowship. Consequently, they are unable to apply the truths found in Scripture and therefore are restricted by their ignorance. This results in frustration which is expressed by their criticisms of those who are grace oriented.

E. Summary Principles

1. Continuation of the sins of the tongue indicates that the sin is facilitated and has led the believer into reversionism and unreversed will lead to the sin unto death.

Psalm 12:2 They speak falsehood to one another;
with flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.

v. 3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, the
tongue that speaks great things;

v. 4 Who have said, “With our tongue we will
prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?”

2. God protects and blesses the believer who is victimized by the sins of the tongue. This is the grace provision whereby grace turns cursing into blessing. (Job 5:19–21)



3. The untamed tongue can destroy an entire congregation. This is the underlying principle which we have studied in James 3:5–6. Since this is an established fact, then no congregation is immune to this threat.
4. Paul gives a good example of this threat in:
2 Timothy 2:14 Be reminding the congregation of these things and charge them in the presence of God that it is useless to argue about words, which is useless to do, and it leads to reversionism among the hearers.
5. When correct doctrine is taught, those who hear will be tested on that information. For example, doctrine that communicates the problems associated with gossip, maligning, and judging, while rejecting the teaching authority of the pastor, fails the test.
2 Timothy 2:15 Be motivated to present yourself approved to God as a teacher not put to shame, accurately and skillfully exegeting the Word of truth.
v. 16 But keep on avoiding cosmic and empty chattering, for that will advance further into reversionism.
v. 17a In fact, their talk will spread like gangrene or cancer [**γάγγραινα** (*gángraina*)⁶]. (EXT)
6. Scripture offers encouragement to those who avoid sins of the tongue:
Psalms 34:12 Who is the man who desires life and loves length of days that he may see good?
v. 13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. (NASB)
7. Believers occupied with the sins and failure of others cannot advance in the plan of God. Out-of-fellowship believers are in the cosmic systems.
8. All believers sin and each one has the right to recover through rebound without static from gossipmongers who judge and malign.
9. Such behavior actually interferes with judgment and discipline from God.
10. Therefore, the sins and failures of other believers must be left in the hands of the Lord for judgment.

(End JAS3-36. See JAS3-37 for continuation of study at p. 361.)

⁶ “γάγγραινα: A disease involving severe inflammation, which left unchecked can become a destructive ulcerous condition, gangrene, cancer, of spreading ulcers (medical term since Hippocrates (c. 460 B.C.),” in Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 186.



11. Two verses are pertinent to self-righteous arrogance of the legalistic believer:

Romans 14:4 Who are you who keeps on judging the house servant belonging to another? To his own Lord [**Jesus Christ**] he stands firm from an inventory of divine viewpoint or falls through negative volition to truth; in fact he will stand fast, for the Lord has the power to make him stand fast. (EXT)

12. This is a cultural example from the first century A.D. One of the greatest social mistakes was to criticize the domestic servant of a household. If you had a problem with a servant, you took your complaint to his master.
13. The application of this illustration involves a household servant who is submissive only to his master. Others have no authority over him. Anyone who breaches this cultural standard by personally criticizing another man's servant has committed a major social faux pas.
14. Paul uses this illustration to make the point that every believer is considered the house slave of God Who is both his protector and his judge.
15. When anyone decides to criticize, malign, or judge another believer, he has violated the principle laid down by Romans 14:4 and its context.
16. No one has authority over another believer except for a very few and specifically named individuals, for example, children, employees, junior ranking officers, and students.
17. Every believer is a slave to the Lord in both time and eternity. As such, believers remain under His authority under the principle of divine justice.
18. The grace of God administers the variations of spiritual growth among believers. When out of fellowship, the immature believer often maligns a mature believer because of doctrinal ignorance, but that person is not under the weak believer's authority but the Lord's.
19. Regardless the mature believer must not browbeat the immature believer or distract him from growing in grace.

Romans 15:1 Now we, the strong [**mature believers**], are obligated under the Honor Code to keep on bearing the weaknesses of the immature believer [**do not distract the positive from growing in grace**], just to please ourselves.