



## “Spiritual Salt Water”

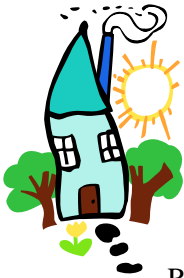


A physical wound can heal in time, but a wound caused by words can last a lifetime.

It is a strange thing, but true, that people with low self-esteem judge themselves and others without mercy. In their own need to feel better about themselves, they find it necessary to pull down other people with words so they can feel above that person and look down on them. The Bible calls looking down on another person a proud look or being haughty. The world calls it “looking down your nose” at somebody for who they are, or what they said, or what they did.

This doesn’t sound like such an awful thing to do, does it? After all some people just don’t measure up, right? Wrong!! We looked at it through the world’s eyes, now let’s look at it through God’s eyes. The Bible says, “*These six things the Lord hates, in fact there are seven things that are an abomination (disgusting) to Him: a proud look (a haughty spirit that makes one overestimate one’s self and underestimate others); a lying tongue; hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that imagines wicked thoughts; feet that are swift in running to mischief; a false witness who breathes out lies; and one that sows discord among one’s sisters and brothers.*”

(Proverbs 6:16-19)



When any of these things are happening in a household, the peace of that house is destroyed – and when peace is gone, strife moves in and takes over. Strife is a rude house guest and hard to get rid of. It’s a lot better to guard the door and not to let strife in in the first place. The door that strife comes in through is the mouth.

Remember how the atmosphere in the whole house is affected when children are fighting and arguing? Most parents can’t stand it and say (or yell) to their kids, “WILL YOU KIDS PLEASE TRY TO GET ALONG!” That is exactly what strife does. It is an evil spirit that works through the weaknesses of our flesh to keep the atmosphere in our homes, in our lives, and in the attitudes of our hearts, in constant turmoil. Strife ruins personal relationships on all levels.

Paul, the Apostle, recognized and warned us about the destructive power of strife that will even affect our relationship with God. He wrote about this very thing in Philippians 2:3, “*Do nothing to cause division – through strife or selfishness – or prompted by self-conceit. Instead, in the true spirit of lowliness of mind (humbleness), let each of you regard the others as better than himself – thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves.*”

Strife is a trap the devil lures people into – even born again Christians who truly love God. Once strife gets in, it never rests. There will be constant turmoil and relationship problems, with no inner rest or peace. It often takes the form of bickering, arguing and an angry undercurrent. Perhaps the angry undercurrent is the most dangerous. It seems everyone is pretending that all is well, but under the surface of relationships an explosion is brewing.

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Hidden strife gets distorted in the mind so badly that little unforgiven things eat away at the peace of mind of those involved, until the slightest word or look or action can become fuel for the fire as it is added to the gathered list of wrongs until it becomes a major issue. This kind of strife can rob you of your health, your closest relationships, your finances and affect all other areas of your life.

**DON'T ALLOW STRIFE IN YOUR LIFE!** Guard your peace of mind with all diligence! Resist the devil and he will flee from you, taking his spirit of strife with him. Jesus gave us His peace: *"Peace I leave with you; My own peace I now give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid – stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled."* (John 14:27)

Learning to recognize strife and stop participating in it is not an easy victory to win. We must first take a good, hard look at ourselves and bring to our remembrance how easily we have repeated gossip, and shared rumors that we didn't even know the truth about. Learning to keep our mouths shut when we don't know what we're talking about, and swallowing our pride that makes us want to look down on someone else's failures or mistakes so we can feel better than they are, or about ourselves.

Many times, people will become busy-bodies and whisperers behind closed doors about another person – or persons – because they don't want to have to face the problems in their own life and take responsibility for the solutions of their own problems.



Another problem with gossip and rumors is that you will usually find that when you thought you were right – you were probably wrong. The Bible is very strong on this issue: *"The human tongue can no man tame. It is an undisciplined, restless evil, full of death-bringing poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who were made in God's likeness! Out of the same mouth come forth blessings (love words) and cursing (hate words). These things should not be so. Does a fountain send forth from the same opening fresh water and bitter? Can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring furnish fresh water."* (James 3:8-12)

The Bible talks a lot about bearing fruit, the fruit of the Spirit which is: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (not losing your temper).



Fruit trees that are watered with salt water will bring forth bitter fruit. *"If we live by the (Holy) Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit – if by the Spirit we have our life (in God), let us go forward walking in line with Him, our conduct controlled by the Spirit. Let us not become self-conceited, competitive and challenging, provoking and irritating one another, envying and being jealous of one another."* (Galatians 5:25,26)



## *“Spiritual Salt Water”*

1. How do people with low self-esteem judge others? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the Bible call looking down on another person?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What 7 things does the Lord hate?
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7) \_\_\_\_\_
4. When peace is gone, what moves in and takes over? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the door that lets strife in? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is strife?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the most dangerous form that strife can take?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How can I guard my peace of mind?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How can I turn off the bitter water faucet in my mouth? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Can I hide bitterness in my heart without people knowing? (James 3:11)  
(The answer to this question will be your memory verse)

MEMORY VERSE \_\_\_\_\_

## *“Spiritual Salt Water”*

1. How do people with low self-esteem judge others? Without mercy.
2. What does the Bible call looking down on another person?

A proud look or being haughty.

3. What 7 things does the Lord hate?

- 1) A proud look.
- 2) A lying tongue.
- 3) Hands that shed innocent blood.
- 4) A heart that imagines wicked thoughts.
- 5) Feet that are swift in running to mischief.
- 6) A false witness that breathes out lies.
- 7) One that sows discord among one’s sisters and brothers.

4. When peace is gone, what moves in and takes over? Strife.

5. What is the door that lets strife in? My mouth.

6. What is strife?

An evil spirit that works through the weaknesses of our flesh.

7. What is the most dangerous form that strife can take?

An angry undercurrent under the surface of relationships.

8. How can I guard my peace of mind?

Resist the devil and he will flee from me taking his spirit of strife with him.

9. How can I turn off the bitter water faucet in my mouth? Close it.

10. Can I hide bitterness in my heart without people knowing? (James 3:11)

MEMORY VERSE “Does a fountain send forth from the same opening fresh water and bitter?”