

God wants us to consider carefully what we say about others

To say that we ought to control our tongues is to say the obvious. But actually doing something about the problem is not easy. James wrote that the tongue is “an unruly evil” (**Jas. 3:8 NKJV**), harder to tame than a wild animal. Just when we think we are making a little progress along these lines, we slip up and say something we know we should not. God knows that we struggle, but He has also provided that in every situation there will be a “way of escape” (**1 Cor. 10:13**) from temptations like the urge to say improper things. Our Father can help us do the right thing, but He expects us to make the choice to be careful.

It is said about the Lord Himself that people “marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth” (**Lk. 4:22**). And Paul wrote that we ought to say only that which “may give grace to those who hear” (**Eph. 4:29**). We can hardly claim to be a people like the Lord if our speech is characterized by a lack of graciousness.

We obviously live in a world filled with strife. Perhaps we can do little to stop the wars that rage between nations, but we can do something to make our own relationships more peaceful. Since careless words are one of the main contributors to strife, we can make great improvements in the peacefulness of our relationships by refraining from words that create needless discord.

Although it is hard, it is not impossible to keep from gossiping and talebearing. We can do it, and we need to concentrate this week (and every week) on the fact that **God wants us to consider carefully what we say about others**. So many things we say about other people are things we would refrain from saying if we simply stopped to think for a moment. After we have indulged in harmful talk it does little good to say, “Well, I just wasn’t thinking.” Before we speak, God expects us to think — and we can do this if we train ourselves to do so.

Let’s make this week one of growth in the quality of our conversations with others. If we can diminish the problem of gossip in our daily speech, we will help ourselves and we will help the congregation of which we are members.

Monday: James 3:1-12

Key Idea: It is not easy to control our tongues, but God will help us to do so.

Questions for Family Growth: What does James mean in **v.8** that the tongue “is a restless evil, full of deadly poison”? What is the problem James mentions in **vv.9,10**? What practical steps can we take to help control the tongue?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 24:15,16.**

Tuesday: Proverbs 11:13; 20:19

Key Idea: We do not need to tell everything we know about others.

Questions for Family Growth: In **11:13**, what is a “talebearer” (NKJV)? How do you think the motives of a person who “reveals secrets” (**20:19**) might be different from those of one who “keeps a thing covered” (**11:13**)? What does it mean to be “trustworthy in spirit” (**11:13**)?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 24:17,18.**

Wednesday: Proverbs 26:20-22

Key Idea: Gossip is often the thing that keeps quarrels going.

Questions for Family Growth: To what is gossip compared in **vv.20,21**? What is said about it in **v.22**? Why do you think it is so hard to keep from saying things about others that should be kept private? What are some things we could do that would help us in this matter?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 24:19,20.**

Thursday: Proverbs 12:17-22

Key Idea: It is wrong to make ourselves feel good by saying bad things about others.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.18**, what does it mean that “there is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword” (NKJV)? Is it right to say things just for fun that hurt other people’s feelings? In **v.18**, what does the tongue of the wise do?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 24:21,22.**

Friday: Matthew 12:33-37

Key Idea: We will answer to God for every idle word we speak.

Questions for Family Growth: What did Jesus mean when He said that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”? In **v.36**, what are “idle words” (NKJV)? By what did Jesus say we will be either justified or condemned?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 24:23-25.**

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