Taming the Tongue

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“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer”
(Psalm 19:14; Cf. James 3:3-12)

I. Introduction
The tongue is the revealer of the heart (Matthew 12:34). “Words are the vehicle for the revelation of the thoughts and intents of one’s mind (heart) to others.”

II. The Words of James (James 3:3-12).

A. Our problem.
   1. An uncontrolled tongue. Man cannot tame it, but God can.
   2. Gossip (Prov. 20:19, 1 Tim 3:11).
      a. Malicious gossip. This is gossip that is consciously and deliberately hurtful. It stems from envy and is rooted in flagrant selfishness. It is designed to break up relationships and destroy friendships. It can manifest itself in all kinds of evil deeds.
      b. Rationalization. It is far more subtle than malicious gossip. What makes rationalization so dangerous is that it often results from self-deception. Because rationalization is rooted and based in the same motives as malicious gossip, the person who rationalizes has convinced herself that she is doing it for “the good” of the other person. She may disguise it as “prayer interest” and “personal concern.” Nevertheless rationalization is very destructive.
      c. “Innocent” gossip. This involves a person who truly is concerned, but who is, to a certain extent, unwise and insensitive to other people’s feelings. Innocent gossip is sometimes motivated by a desire to be “helpful”; but in reality, the gossiper may be trying to prove to others “how helpful she really is.” In this situation there is a very fine line between “selfish” and “unselfish” motives. All Christians must beware of this kind of gossip.
(Prov 20:19; Rom 1:29; 1 Tim 3:11)
--Taken from Growing in Wisdom and Faith by Elizabeth George who quotes Dr. Gene Getz.

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B. Our Solution - the Word of God

1. Speak with grace (Col 4:6).
   “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

2. Speak with gentleness (Prov 15:1).
   “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

   “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.”

4. Saturate yourself in prayer (Col 4:2, Phil 4:6-7).
   “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”

5. Store God’s Word in your heart (Ps 119:11).
   “Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”


1. Be an example of the believer by our words (1 Tim 4:12).

2. Be a witness to lost sinners with our words (Mark 16:15).

D. The Words of Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2:11).

1. Her problem (1 Sam 1:4-8).

2. Her prayer (1 Sam 1:9-18).

3. Her song of praise (1 Sam 2:1-10).

III. Application.

A. Are your words gentle?
   “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1).
   “She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue (Prov 31:26).
   “Kind words are sympathetic, compassionate, and biblically loving. Becoming a Titus 2 Woman by Peace.

B. Are your words true?
“Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight” (Prov12:22).

C. Does your tongue heal? “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Prov 16:24).

D. Does your tongue proclaim the message of salvation to others? Matt 28:19-20

E. Suggestions for your communication to others.
   1. Talk less, listen more.
   2. Be kind to unkind people.
   3. Sit on your ego.
   4. Develop a forgiving attitude.

IV. Assignment

Write out a few decisions based on Scripture about your own tongue and your use of it in the home, the church and in the world. Perhaps some of the verses listed in the outline above will be a good starting place or go through the book of Proverbs.

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<th>Scripture Verse</th>
<th>Decision</th>
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<td>Prov 31:26</td>
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