



Your Mouth is Telling on You

Author: Jennifer Smith

Preview

The things you say in your day-to-day exchanges tell a lot about your values. Learning to control your tongue will help you reflect the love of Jesus as well as save you heartache and embarrassment.

Play the “word chain” game. Say any word (e.g., *sun*). The next person adds a related word (*sun, yellow*), and the chain continues around the group, growing in length until someone forgets or incorrectly recites the list. The only rule is that each new word must relate to the previous word in some way. (*Sun, yellow, banana, healthy, gym, etc.*)

Praise

Everyone should tell about something good God’s been doing in his or her life.

Parable

It was Jessica’s first day at her new school, and Whitney volunteered to show her around. Walking Jessica to her class, Whitney cursed when she accidentally dropped her books. At lunch, she gave Jessica a running history of the school’s juiciest gossip. Then, right after back-talking a teacher’s aide, Whitney called a kid a rude name. After school, Whitney smiled at Jessica. “How would you like to go to church with me on Sunday?”

Jessica raised an eyebrow. “You’re a Christian? I never would have guessed.”

Present

Want people to know you follow Jesus? You could paint “I’m a Christian” on your forehead. But it would be a whole lot easier—and more convincing—to let your daily interactions speak for you. Chances are, people suspect you are (or aren’t) a Christian before you ever mention the word “church.” You can be chatting about sports or shopping or music and also be broadcasting your relationship with Jesus. How? Your mouth is telling on you.



The Bible says that those who consider themselves religious but don't keep a tight rein on their tongues are deceiving themselves (**James 1:26**). The tongue, though a small part of the body, is like the spark that starts a raging forest fire. It's like an animal that cannot be tamed. Often, it's used to bless God in one sentence while cursing people in the next (**James 3:5-10**). For someone who wants to reflect Jesus, this should never be the case.

Words are for encouraging people, inspiring others, being grateful, and showing love. Above all, they should honor God. Your age isn't an excuse to speak before thinking. According to **1 Timothy 4:12**, young people can be an example to other believers of how a Christian should talk and behave.

Clean, honest speech pleases God, but it also benefits you. **1 Peter 3:10** and **Proverbs 21:23** indicate that guarding your mouth will bring you happiness and keep you out of trouble. Have you ever wished you could take back something you've said? Having a disciplined tongue cuts back on hurt feelings, broken relationships, and lost credibility.

Take a look at **Ephesians 4:29** and **5:4**. Your mouth should never be used to broadcast dirty laundry—whether it be yours or someone else's. It shouldn't be comfortable lashing out in anger or blabbing secrets. It shouldn't be a factory of broken promises. A mouth that complains is a sign of an ungrateful owner, and a mouth that is used for saying dirty, disrespectful, hurtful words should be fitted for a zipper.

In **Psalms 141:3**, the writer David asked the Lord to set a guard over his mouth and keep watch over the door of his lips. This should always be our prayer.

Pactice

1. What can you do when you're tempted to snap at someone in anger?
2. Why do you think teens cuss? If you have a problem with cussing, can you think of ways to start breaking the habit?
3. What can you do when your friends' conversations turn to gossip or inappropriate subject matter?

Pray

*Read **Psalm 19:14**.* God, set a watch over our mouths and guard our lips. Help us to be a consistent example of Christ-like behavior. Please forgive us for the times irresponsible words have popped out of our mouths. Thank You, God, for blessing those who seek to do Your will.



Plus

For the next week, challenge yourself to say only words that are positive or uplifting. It may help to stay accountable to a group of friends. Make an agreement together to pay a quarter into a jar anytime you say something negative or inappropriate. At the end of the week, the person who's had the best control of his or her tongue wins the money.