

Controlling the Tongue

Restraint - Not talking too much

Psalms 39:1 I said, "I will watch my ways, so that I don't sin with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me."

- What did he mean to restrain his mouth with a bridle or muzzle?

Proverbs 10:19 19 In the multitude of words there is no lack of disobedience, but he who restrains his lips does wisely.

- What is not lacking when words are plentiful?
- How careful do we need to be about having a multitude of words?

When we look at our example, Jesus, what do we find that he talked about? Is there even one example where his speech could be considered casual or idle. His speech was very much focused on God's kingdom.

If we include Paul in our list of examples, we know that he spoke of affection and concern, missing people he was away from. We still don't see him spending a lot of time discussing sports (or the coliseum games) or politics (what should the next caesar do to improve the Rome economy).

How are we doing at being stewards of how we use our speech? Does our focus (percentage of time) reflect our real priorities?

Proverbs 17:27-28 27 He who spares his words has knowledge. He who is even tempered is a man of understanding. 28 Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is counted wise. When he shuts his lips, he is thought to be discerning.

- What can cause us to be counted wise?

Do we recognize the risk/danger when we say things? Do we take time to consider whether what we are saying is letting our light shine or dimming our influence? Are we any different than the world?

Proverbs 23:9 Don't speak in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words

- Do we need to consider the person we are speaking to?

Proverbs 18:2 2 A fool has no delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own opinion.

- Is it a temptation to focus on and express our own opinions and feelings?

Do we remember that our opinions can be wrong. There are ways that seem right to man. We need to stay close to what God has revealed. Beyond that, many things can seem right to us, but not be.

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Ecclesiastes 5:6-7 6 Don't allow your mouth to lead you into sin. Don't protest before the messenger that this was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams there are vanities, as well as in many words; but you must fear God.

- Is it tempting to make excuses for wrong things we say and claim it was a mistake?

Proverbs 26:17 17 Like one who grabs a dog's ears is one who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own.

- Does it take wisdom to know when to help (be a peacemaker) and when we shouldn't meddle?

Haste - Talking without Thought

Psalms 17:3 3 You have proved my heart. You have visited me in the night. You have tried me, and found nothing. I have resolved that my mouth shall not disobey.

- How do we purpose (resolve), does this imply planning?

Proverbs 21:23 23 Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

- What does it mean to guard our mouth?

Proverbs 29:20 20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

- Why is there more hope for a fool?

Proverbs 15:28 28 The heart of the righteous weighs answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes out evil.

- On what should we study before we answer?

James 1:26 26 If anyone among you thinks himself to be religious while he doesn't bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this man's religion is worthless.

- How serious is not bridling our tongue?

Deceit

Revelations 21:8 8 But for the cowardly, unbelieving, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

- How serious is lying, what fate awaits?
- Which type of lie causes this fate, black lies, white lies, lies to prevent hurting someone's feelings, lies told in a good cause?

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1 Peter 3:10 10 For, “He who would love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.

- Can we deceive without telling an actual lie?

1 Peter 2:1-3 Putting away therefore all wickedness, all deceit, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, that with it you may grow, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious:

- Can we grow without laying aside all deceit?

Proverbs 25:18 18 A man who gives false testimony against his neighbor is like a club, a sword, or a sharp arrow.

- Can lies have consequences?

John 8:44 44 You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn't stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

- Whose language are we speaking when we speak lies, even well-intentioned ones?

Proverbs 6:16-19 16 There are six things which Yahweh hates; yes, seven which are an abomination to him: 17 arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, 19 a false witness who utters lies, and he who sows discord among brothers.

- Are lies mentioned more than once in the 6 things the Lord hates, why?

1 Thessalonians 2:3 3 For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in deception.

- Can there be a temptation to use deceit for a good purpose (exhortation)?

2 Corinthians 4:2 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

- Can we be tempted to misuse God's word deceitfully to prove something that we know is true from other verses?

Joking

Proverbs 26:18-19 18 Like a madman who shoots torches, arrows, and death, 19 is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, “Am I not joking?”

- Is using deceit in a prank ok?

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Ephesians 5:3-5 3 But sexual immorality, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be mentioned among you, as becomes saints; 4 nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not appropriate, but rather giving of thanks. 5 Know this for sure, that no sexually immoral person, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.

- What is coarse jesting?

Anger and Rude Communication

Proverbs 15:1-2 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. 2 The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of fools gush out folly.

- Can we use knowledge wrongly, even foolishly?

Matthew 5:22 22 But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be in danger of the judgment. Whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' will be in danger of the council. Whoever says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of Gehenna.

- What is meant by "you fool"?

Romans 12:21 21 Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Do we often face a temptation to get even, to right a wrong in wrong ways?

Corrupt Language

Exodus 20:7 7 "You shall not misuse the name of Yahweh your God, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who misuses his name.

- What does it mean to take God's name in vain, what would be included in this?

Ephesians 4:29 29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but only what is good for building others up as the need may be, that it may give grace to those who hear.

- How much corrupt language is allowed?

Colossians 3:8 8 but now you also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and shameful speaking out of your mouth.

- What is filthy language (shameful speaking)?

Gossip

James 4:11 11 Don't speak against one another, brothers. He who speaks against a brother and judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge.

- Can we speak evil, even when we say something true?

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Proverbs 26:20 For lack of wood a fire goes out. Without gossip, a quarrel dies down.

- What is the obvious result from gossip, is it something we want to be associated with?

Leviticus 19:16 16 “You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people. “You shall not endanger the life of your neighbor. I am Yahweh.

- What is a talebearer?

Swearing Oaths

James 5:12 12 But above all things, my brothers, don't swear— not by heaven, or by the earth, or by any other oath; but let your “yes” be “yes”, and your “no”, “no”, so that you don't fall into hypocrisy.

Matthew 5:33-36 33 “Again you have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall perform to the Lord your vows, 34 but I tell you, don't swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; 35 nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shall you swear by your head, for you can't make one hair white or black. 37 But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ Whatever is more than these is of the evil one.

- Can we swear at all?

Exodus 22:11 11 the oath of Yahweh shall be between them both, he has not put his hand on his neighbor's goods; and its owner shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution.

- In the Old Testament, did God require oaths in some situations?

2 Corinthians 1:23 23 But I call God for a witness to my soul, that I didn't come to Corinth to spare you.

Galatians 1:20 20 Now about the things which I write to you, behold, before God, I'm not lying.

- Were these two examples oaths?

What Affects our Speech

Matthew 12:34-37 34 You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. 35 The good man out of his good treasure brings out good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings out evil things. 36 I tell you that every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

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Matthew 15:18 18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come out of the heart, and they defile the man.

- Where does wrong speech come from?
- How important are idle words, even spoken without a thought?

Philippians 4:8 8 Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report: if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think about these things.

- How can we influence what is in our hearts?

1 Corinthians 15:33 3 Don't be deceived! "Evil companionships corrupt good morals."

- What is evil company?
- Can what we watch on TV, social media, and Youtube be evil company?

Things We Should Be Saying

Psalms 35:28 28 My tongue shall talk about your righteousness and about your praise all day long.

Psalms 119:171-172 171 Let my lips utter praise, for you teach me your statutes. 172 Let my tongue sing of your word, for all your commandments are righteousness.

- What should fill our hearts and become our words?

Ezekiel 33:6 6 But if the watchman sees the sword come, and doesn't blow the trumpet, and the people aren't warned, and the sword comes, and takes any person from among them; he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.'

- Can keeping silent be wrong?

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 6 These words, which I command you today, shall be on your heart; 7 and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

- What important purpose mentioned here do our words fulfill?

Isaiah 5:20-21 20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

- Does the world today use this temptation trying to force us into its mold?

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Consequences of our Speech

Psalms 139:4 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, but, behold, Yahweh, you know it altogether.

- Do we realize that God knows everything we say?

Matthew 12:36-37 36 I tell you that every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

- Will we be judged by what we say?

Psalms 19:14 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, Yahweh, my rock, and my redeemer.

Matthew 15:11 11 That which enters into the mouth doesn't defile the man; but that which proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”

Proverbs 12:13 An evil man is trapped by sinfulness of lips, but the righteous shall come out of trouble.

- Can our speech be acceptable to God?