

# Think On This



## Think Before You Speak

The title of our article was a phrase often used as I was growing up. It is obvious that this phrase is seldom applied today, as rude and profane language is commonplace. Though our society has cast off all restraints concerning the tongue, it is important that you and I do not follow their lead. The importance of the tongue is clearly illustrated in the scriptures. In **James 3:2-12** we learn how the misuse of the tongue can be extremely damaging. **Matthew 12:34-37** shows that the words of one's mouth indicate the condition of one's heart. In **James 1:26** we read, *"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."* Let us be careful not to "deceive our own heart."

### "I wish I didn't say that."

I am sure that all of us on various occasions have been guilty of saying words that we wish we had not said. But wishes do not erase the foolish words which are often expressed in times of stress, anger and frustration. Consider how **Proverbs 21:23** can help us overcome this problem. There it states, *"Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles."* Let us take time to commit this verse to memory if we haven't already done so. But equally important, let us make application of the lesson that this verse teaches in our daily conduct and especially when we encounter stressful situations.

### "But he made me so mad!"

How often do we excuse ourselves of our thoughtless and unkind words because the inappropriate behavior of another made us mad? Remember **Psalms 39:1**, *"I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me."* From this scripture we learn that we can sin with our tongue, *"lest I sin with my tongue"*. We also learn that we have the power to control our tongue, *"I will guard my ways"*. Therefore instead of throwing off all restraint when someone provokes us, we must learn to muzzle our initial reaction. It would also help to learn and apply the lessons taught in **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:9** and **Proverbs 15:1**.

### "What did you say?"

It is not uncommon to observe that those who have the most problems in the controlling their tongue are poor listeners also. Have you ever observed a heated exchange between two individuals? Often they are so busy trading insults at the same time that neither is willing to stop speaking nor listen. Thus, their words become like daggers aimed to inflict emotional pain on the other. A valuable and practical lesson to overcome the afore mentioned example of becoming a reality in your life is found in **James 1:19-20** which states, *"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."* Three lessons are clearly bought out in this text. First, one needs to listen *"be swift to hear."* Second, a person needs to restrain himself or herself from speaking to soon, *"slow to speak."* Third, it is important to remember *"the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."* Let us make it our aim to be good listeners so that we don't speak foolishly as illustrated in **Proverbs 18:13** which states, *"He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him."*

In closing let us develop our communication skills in harmony with **Ephesians 4:29**, **Colossians 4:6** and **Proverbs 15:23**.

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