

# Deeply Rooted in the Discipline of Controlling Your Tongue

## Salty Words

I remember the first time I cooked a meal for myself—a box of macaroni and cheese (hey, you have to start somewhere!). I followed the directions exactly—or so I thought. I sat down to enjoy my first ever cooked meal to discover that it was un-edible. It was too salty. In tears I called my mom, because I couldn't figure out what I had done. As I read the instructions on the box to mom, from the beginning, where it says to “add a teaspoon of salt to the water.” My mother immediately stopped me and asked me what measuring spoon I had used for the salt (and she also told me that the salt wasn't really necessary). I looked in the sink, and to my horror a teaspoon wasn't sitting there, but a table-spoon. I had added way too much salt, and there was no fixing it. I dumped the salty macaroni and cheese into the garbage can.

Just like I ruined my macaroni with too much salt, I can ruin things by saying too much. In Colossians 4:6 Paul writes, **Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.** What does Paul mean when he says our words should be seasoned with salt?

In Paul's time, salt served primarily as a preservative. Salt would be rubbed into meat to keep it from spoiling (they didn't have refrigeration in Paul's time). If we are to speak salty words, we need to speak words that are preservative. We need to speak words that “preserve” the conversation. The *MacArthur New Testament Commentary on Colossians 4* puts it this way: “Believers speech should act as a purifying influence, rescuing conversation from the filth that so often engulfs it.”

Salt was also used for healing. Our words should be healing words, that encourage, uplift and soothe. Proverbs 12:18 reminds us that **the words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.** Despite what the old adage says, we have all experienced how much words can hurt us.

Salt also adds flavor. Too much salt can ruin a dish just like too many words can ruin a conversation and a friendship. Choose what words need to be said, and what words should remain unspoken. I don't know about you, but I don't want to leave a bad taste in someone's mouth because of words I have said.

As Christ followers our words need to be seasoned with salt—words that promote preservation and not decay, words that bring healing and not hurt, words that should be flavorful to the hearer's ears.

Why are our words so important? We represent Jesus, and without actually speaking His name, we can draw people to Him by our loving and gentle responses, or we can repel people away from Him because we don't use gracious words that are seasoned with salt.

Lord, help us speak in ways that are seasoned with salt, in ways that draw people to You, in ways that point people to You. Lord, may we be women who speak with wisdom and have faithful instruction on our tongues (Proverbs 31:26).



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## Conversation Starters

Gather with some friends and spend some time discussing the words we speak with these conversation starters.

- ◆ Do you remember a specific time when someone said something that hurt you? How about when somebody said something that lifted you up and made you feel loved and noticed?
- ◆ “Have you ever said something you regretted? How did you feel after you said it? How did you rectify the situation?”
- ◆ What are words you can say this week to lift someone up?
- ◆ Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me.” How is that a beneficial thing to remember? How is it not true?
- ◆ How would you feel if your conversations this week were recorded and broadcast for everyone to hear? What would you want to erase? Why? What would you be proud of?
- ◆ What tricks or tips do you have to help you consider what should or shouldn’t be said.
- ◆ Is there anyone you need to say sorry to for the words you have said?

**“God has given us two ears, but one tongue, to show that we should be swift to hear, but slow to speak. God has set a double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue.”** Thomas Watson

### Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you be rooted in the discipline of controlling your tongue  
<https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Taming the Tongue*, a study on James 3:1-12 by Captain Charlene Morrow.

Blog: Colonel Genevera Vincent shares wisdom about *Controlling the Tongue*.

Craft: *Door Hanging Wreath* by Lt. Katherine Hernandez.

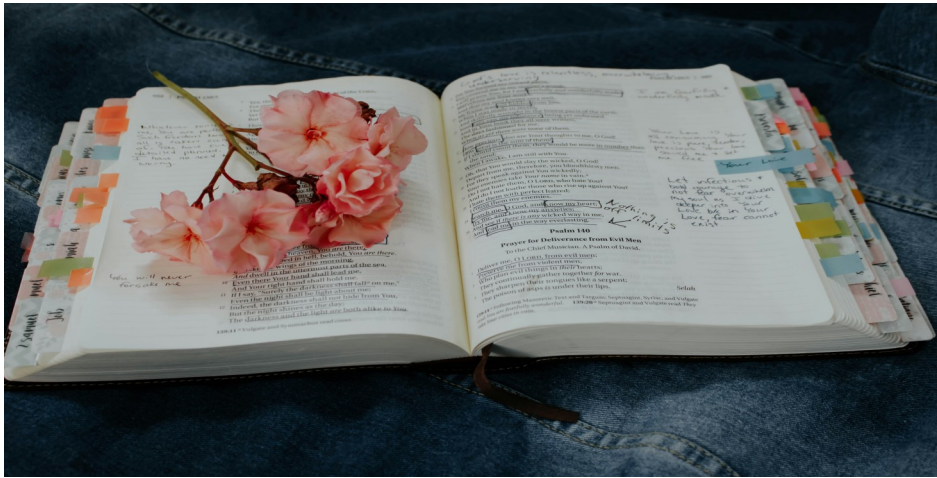
Devotional: *Taming the Tongue in Prayer* by Captain Charlene Morrow.

## Guard My Mouth Prayers

Have you ever squeezed too much toothpaste out of the tube? We all have. And we know that once it is out of the tube, there is no putting it back in. The same is true with our words. Once they are spoken, there is no taking them back. According to experts, the average person speaks 16,000 words a day. That is a lot of opportunity to say the wrong thing. We need to be careful of our words, before we speak them. As you brush your teeth in the morning and the evening, pray and ask God to guard your mouth and the words that you speak.

Morning Prayer: Lord, as I start my day, help me be mindful of my tongue and the words I speak. ***Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues*** (Proverbs 10:19). ***Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of my [my mouth], but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen*** (Ephesians 4:29). ***Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips*** (Psalm 141:3). ***May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*** (Psalm 19:14).

Evening Prayer: Lord, as I end my day, ***Search me, God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*** (Psalm 139:23-24). Lord, show me where I failed to guard my mouth and my tongue caused calamity (Proverbs 21:23), where I added wood to a fire by gossiping (Proverbs 26:20), where I crushed spirits with a preserve tongue rather than offer soothing words (Proverbs 15:4). Lord, forgive me, and help me tomorrow to speak words of life and death (Proverbs 18:21). May I not speak reckless words that pierce like swords, but speak wise words that bring healing (Proverbs 12:18).



*The Bible has a lot to say about the words that we speak!*

## Flourishing in the Word

This month let's look at what God's Word has to say about the use of our tongues.

May 1	Psalm 15:1-5	May 17	Proverbs 18:1-24
May 2	Psalm 19:1-14	May 18	Proverbs 21:1-31
May 3	Psalm 34:1-14	May 19	Proverbs 25:1-28
May 4	Psalm 39:1-13	May 20	Proverbs 26:1-28
May 5	Psalm 52:1-9	May 21	Proverbs 29:1-27
May 6	Psalm 119:169-176	May 22	Ecclesiastes 5:1-7
May 7	Psalm 141:1-10	May 23	Matthew 12:33-37
May 8	Proverbs 6:1-19	May 24	Matthew 15:1-20
May 9	Proverbs 10:1-32	May 25	Luke 6:43-45
May 10	Proverbs 11:1-31	May 26	Ephesians 4:17-32
May 11	Proverbs 12:1-28	May 27	Colossians 4:2-6
May 12	Proverbs 13:1-25	May 28	Titus 3:1-11
May 13	Proverbs 14:1-35	May 29	James 1:19-27
May 14	Proverbs 15:1-33	May 30	James 3:1-12
May 15	Proverbs 16:1-31	May 31	1 Peter 3:8-17
May 16	Proverbs 17:1-28		

### Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

**Anchorage Korean, AK** are reading through the Bible. One of the women who can't see well, is participating by listening to the assigned reading from an Audio Bible.

**Angoon, AK** held a community baby shower for all the ladies in the village who were expecting.

**Glendale/Burbank, CA** collected needed supplies to be sent to soldiers and troops serving overseas through "Operation Gratitude."

**Centralia, WA** did an outreach to a known prostitution location. **Kenai, AK** moms come early to pick up their kids from singing company and they gather together to talk and enjoy tea together.

**Pendleton, OR** ladies went and saw the movie "The Sound of Freedom" at the local theater. They left feeling more informed about human trafficking and it opened an opportunity for later discussion.

**San Diego Kroc, CA** gave every woman a journal with a page of journaling prompts, to encourage the women to journal all year long. (It's not too late to start!)

## What Passes From Your Lips?

Paul writes in Philippians 4:8 about what we should think about: ***Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*** We know that what we are thinking about and filling our minds with, will also come out our mouths. So taking Paul’s advice, using the word LIPS, we will be reminded of what words should pass from our lips.



**L—Lovely.** Words that are lovely are pleasing, amiable, and pleasant. Noble (things that deserve respect), admirable (worthy of admiration) and excellent (extremely good, outstanding) words also can fall under the category of lovely. Ugly, unlovely and unloving words do not need to be spoken.

**I—Inspiring.** To inspire means to fill someone with the urge to do or feel something, especially to do something creative. Another definition is to breath in (air). Inspiring words are life-giving. Inspirational words make people feel happier, more capable, and more like they can accomplish their goals.

**P—Pure & Praiseworthy.** Since we have two lips, we have two “P” words reminding us of what to speak. Pure words are clean, spotless, and unsullied. Pure words are holy words, set apart words, godly words. Words of truth are also pure words. Praiseworthy means to be deserving approval and admiration.

**S—Speak these words.** If they are lovely, inspiring, pure and praiseworthy, then go ahead and speak them. If they don’t fit in those categories, shut your mouth, and don’t let the words pass from your lips. When in doubt stay silent!

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***“She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.” Proverbs 31:26***

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## Choosing Words Wisely

Here are some wise sayings about the words we speak:

- Be sure to taste your words before you spit them out.
- You can choose your words. But you cannot choose the effect they can have on people.
- A tongue has no bones but it can break a heart.
- Be careful with your words, once they are said, they can only be forgiven, not forgotten.
- It takes a million compliments to build you up. And one insult to send it all crashing down.
- Don’t mix bad words with your bad mood. You’ll have many opportunities to change a mood, but you’ll never get the opportunity to replace the words you spoke.
- One kind word can change someone’s entire day.
- Kind word can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.