

When To Keep Our Mouth Shut

Part 1

Introduction.

1. The Bible has much to say about the tongue.
 - a. The tongue can be a great blessing to others.
 - b. It can encourage them and bring out the very best in them.
 - c. It can also be a curse to us and others.
 - d. God alone knows all the harm the tongue has done in our lives and in the lives of others.
2. The Bible gives us information when we must speak and when we should keep our mouths shut.
3. This lesson will focus on the subject “When To Keep Our Mouth Shut.”
4. This is a lesson I need and I assume all need.
 - a. “Some things are better left unsaid, which I usually realize right after I say them.”
 - b. Words spoken recklessly are very unsavory when we have to eat them later.
 - c. It has been said, “Better to keep your mouth shut and appear to be stupid than to open it and remove all doubt.”
5. James taught only “perfect” people never sin with the tongue. (Jas. 3:2).

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many {ways.} If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

- a. No one is perfect in the sense of being sinless. (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10).

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

- b. “Perfect” has the idea of being able to control the whole body from sinning.
- c. The person who can control the tongue is able “to bridle the whole body as well.”
- d. Controlling the tongue in the absolute is impossible, but this does not mean we should not seek to

control it according to God's word.

e. James also penned these words to those who want to please the Lord. (Jas. 1:26).

James 1:26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his {own} heart, this man's religion is worthless.

Seventeen Times To Keep Our Mouths Shut

- Let us, in part 1 of this two lesson series, look at seventeen times to keep our mouths shut.
- This study likely will not include every situation when we should keep our mouths shut, but it is meant to motivate us to keep our mouths shut rather than utter foolish and hurtful things.
- Solomon taught us there is a time of speak and a time to keep silent. (Eccles. 3:7).

Eccl 3:7 A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; **A time to be silent and a time to speak.**

- It takes wisdom to learn when to speak and when to keep one's mouth shut.
- This is not an easy lesson to learn , but it must be learned to avoid hurting ourselves and others.

1. **Let us not open our mouths in the heat of anger.** (Prov. 14:17).

Prov 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated.

- a. Being quick-tempered leads to sin and all kinds of trouble.
- b. It most often severs or hurts our relationship with others.
- c. We need to hold our tempers less we hurt others and bring shame on ourselves and cause others to blaspheme God because of our behavior.
- d. This may not come easy, but we can control anger with the help of the Lord. (Phil. 4:13).
- e. Anger causes us to lose our influence and it gives other people control over us.
- f. Others can make us do all kinds of shameful things when we become enraged with devilish anger.
- g. We should keep our mouths shut if we cannot say it without screaming or without losing control of our mouths.

2. **Let us not open our mouths when we do not have all the facts.** (Prov. 18:13).

Prov 18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

- a. It is so easy to jump to conclusions without knowing all the facts.
- b. This is frequently done when we do not like a person or are jealous of them!

c. It is essential we know all the facts before speaking words of criticism and judgment.

3. Let us not open our mouths when we have not verified the story. (Deut. 17:6).

Deut 17:6 "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

- a. In the Old Testament dispensation something was not verified as fact by rumor or gossip or even by a single witness.
- b. There had to be "two witnesses" for something to be regarded as fact.
- c. Jesus recognized this fact in regard to Himself. (Jn. 8:12-18).

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

John 8:13 So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."

John 8:14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

John 8:15 "You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.

John 8:16 "But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone {in it,} but I and the Father who sent Me.

John 8:17 "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true.

John 8:18 "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me."

1) It was not enough for Him to witness of Himself though He always spoke the truth.

2) He needed witnesses.

3) He had the witness of the Father.

4) The Father bore witness of Him at His baptism, at His transfiguration on the mountain (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), and by empowering Him to work miracles.

- d. The New Testament does not have this same requirement as the Old Law did, but it is sinful to jump to conclusions.
- e. Many a person has been hurt or destroyed because someone would not keep his/her mouth shut.
- f. Even if something is true, we must be cautious about opening our mouths if it is going to hurt or destroy another.

4. Don't open your mouth if your words will offend a weaker brother. (1 Cor. 8:11).

1 Cor 8:11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

- a. It takes time to overcome weaknesses of conscience.
- b. Once a person becomes a Christian it is easy to fall back into the old sinful life.

c. In the minds of some when they ate meat that had been offered to idols they were worshipping the god.

d. Putting down a weak brother or practicing his weakness can destroy him!

e. Paul was even willing to forgo the eating of meat if it would cause a brother to stumble. (1 Cor. 8:13).

1 Cor 8:13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

f. The word “stumble” is not talking about something the brother or sister disliked, but was speaking of things that would defile his/her conscience and cause the person to fall away.

5. Don't open your mouth if your words will be a poor reflection of the Lord or your friends or family. (1 Pet. 2:21-23).

1 Pet 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

1 Pet 2:22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

1 Pet 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting {Himself} to Him who judges righteously;

a. As Christ's followers, we must never use our mouths in a way that will shame the Lord.

b. We should use our mouths to bring glory to the Lord and encourage and build up others.

1) The Scriptures teach us to do all to the glory of the Lord. (1 Cor. 10:31).

1 Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

2) The Scriptures also teach us to encourage one another and build one another up. (Heb. 3:13).

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is {still} called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

6. Don't open your mouth if you are tempted to joke about sin. (Prov. 14:9).

Prov 14:9 Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is good will.

a. Sometimes Christians joke about sin and even boast about things they have done in the past.

1) They may be currently living for Christ.

2) Still they boast or joke about the sins of the past.

b. We should never make light of sins whether they be past or present!

c. Assuming we have repented of past sins, we should accept the Lord's forgiveness and express regret when speaking of past transgressions.

- d. We should express thanks that God has forgiven us.
- e. We need to use our mouths to encourage others not to make the same mistakes we have made.

7. Don't open your mouth when you should or would be ashamed of your words later. (Prov. 8:8).

Prov 8:8 "All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; There is nothing crooked or perverted in them.

- a. We need to think before we speak and not feel like we need to always speak when silence would be better.
- b. Most all of us have wished we had kept our mouths shut more than once.
- c. We must work on the habit of keeping our mouths shut even if we feel compelled to speak.

8. Don't open your mouth when you are tempted to make light of holy things. (Eccles. 5:2).

Ecc 5:2 Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.

- a. We should never seek to trivialize the commandments of God.
- b. We may regard certain things as unimportant or even trivial, but God has a reason for all His commandments and instructions.
- c. Though we may not fully understand them, they are all meant for our good.

9. Don't open your mouth if your words are hurtful and unloving. (Prov. 17:17).

Prov 17:17 A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.

- a. Sarcasm is dangerous, hurtful, and destructive!
- b. There is rarely a place for sarcasm, but there is always a place for constructive criticism done in love.

10. Don't open your mouth if the issue is none of your business. (1 Pet. 4:15,16).

1 Pet 4:15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;
1 Pet 4:16 but if {anyone suffers} as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

- a. Being "a troublesome meddler" and seeking to pry into the business of others is forbidden by the Lord.
- b. It can spell trouble by creating anger.
- c. Anger may be manifested in words and actions.

11. Don't open your mouth with grumbling words when unhappy with God. (1 Cor. 10:10).

1 Cor 10:10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

- a. The Israelites had been greatly blessed by God, but this did not keep them from grumbling against God.
- b. God punished them because of their ungrateful hearts that they constantly manifested with their grumbling words.
- c. He will also punish us as He did Israel.
- d. God despises, hates ungrateful hearts.
- e. We are to give thanks for God's marvelous blessings. (1 Thess. 5:18).

1 Thess 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

12. Don't open your mouth when you have asked a question.

- a. It is rude to ask a question and then give the person no opportunity to answer it.
- b. A question should not be asked only as an excuse to keep talking.
- c. It is important that we use restraint and give the other person a chance to talk.
- d. Be quiet, and listen!

13. Don't open your mouth when others need to speak.

- a. Others often have important things to say if given the opportunity.
- b. We must avoid the habit and temptation of monopolizing the conversation.
- c. Conversation is not a one-way street.
- d. Listening will make us smarter and wiser and more understanding of ourselves and others.

14. We need to keep our mouth shut when silence itself speaks louder.

- a. There are times when words actually serve no purpose.
- b. Such expressions "as I know exactly how you feel" are often out of place and not needed.
- c. Being present and showing genuine concern often is more beneficial and powerful than words.
- d. There are times when we should be content to show we care. (Rom. 12:15),.

Rom 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, **and weep with those who weep.**

15. We need to keep our mouth shut when we sound like "a know it all."

- a. Most people appreciate occasional well-meaning good advice.
- b. We should not, however, seize every opportunity to show how much we know.

- c. Even if we think we know it all, it is rude and even harmful to sound like “a know it all.”
- d. No human really knows “all,” and wise people learn to listen!
- e. This helps one to gain knowledge and understanding.

16. We need to keep our mouths shut when basically saying “I told you so.”

- a. Have these four words ever made one feel better about anything?
- b. We hate to hear them and others despise them.
- c. All we are doing is making a bad situation or experience a worse situation.
- d. It is better to keep our mouths shut and only show the person the right way by positive words and actions.

17. We need to keep our mouths shut when silence will do better.

- a. There is an old Spanish proverb that says “Don’t speak unless you improve upon silence.”
- b. Silence often makes the other person speak.
- c. It can keep us from looking like a fool.
- d. Silence helps us to learn.
- e. A failure to listen keeps us from learning many needful things.

Conclusion

- 1. All of us will have a better life by, at times, “Zipping our lips.”
- 2. Silence [keeping our mouths shut] most often makes life better for ourselves and others.
- 3. In part 2 of this lesson we will study thirteen additional times we should keep our mouths shut.

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