

Watch Your Mouth

Who's Master of Your Mouth?

Leader Check-in

What expectations do you have as we begin a study entitled "Watch Your Mouth"? What do you hope to learn?

Discover

Share a story about a time when you experienced the power of the tongue (whether for good or bad). What did you learn from this encounter?

Read **James 3:1-12**. Underline the analogies James uses for the tongue. What common threads can you find between them?

What other analogies can you come up with to describe the power of the tongue?

Read **Matthew 16:21-23**. How do Peter's words reveal his heart in this passage? Why do you think Jesus rebuked him so severely?

Read **Romans 10:9**. What does it mean when we say that "Jesus is Lord?"

Think of a person in your life who has clearly made Jesus the *lord of their lips*. What stands out to you about the way they speak (or don't speak)?

Fully Own

Re-read **James 3:9-12**. Who is currently in charge of your tongue: God or you? Based on your understanding of this passage, can you have it both ways? Why or why not?

Have you ever been the victim of well-intentioned speech that was actually harmful? How did that make you feel? Have you ever made this mistake, yourself?

How would the people who know you best describe the way you use your words? To help or harm? To build up or tear down?

Read **Exodus 4:10-11**. What excuses have you made for not watching your mouth? What is God's promise to you in this area?

Challenge

Commit to memorizing **Proverbs 18:21** between now and next session.

Watch Your Mouth

Your Voice Has Victory

Leader Check-in

Begin your time together with a challenge to write down **Proverbs 18:21** from memory. How easy or difficult was it to memorize this passage? How did your efforts impact your week?

Discover

Read **Colossians 4:2-6**. Make note of all the words or phrases that are related to the way we speak. Based on your understanding of this passage, what words should characterize the speech of those who follow Jesus?

Consider **Proverbs 15:28** in light of Paul's encouragement to the church in Colossae. What is the difference between foolish and wise speech?

If you were being judged based only on your words, would the Bible say that you are wise or foolish?

Read **Ephesians 4:15-16**. According to this passage, what role do our words play in the Church?

How would your understanding of this passage change if the words "in love" were removed from **Ephesians 4:15**? Why are these two words so essential to the passage?

Read **Colossians 3:14-17** from a few different translations (NIV, TLB, ESV, etc). How does this passage summarize what you have been learning about the power of your words?

Fully Own

Do you know someone who speaks the truth without love? Someone who doesn't tell the truth to those they "love"? What have you noticed about the impact of their words on those around them?

How easy or difficult is it for you to speak the truth in love?

Read **Acts 16:24-25**. How can praising God in hard times propel us into a deeper relationship with him?

Do you make a habit of asking God for wisdom before you speak? Why or why not?

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-12, 20-22. How do you tend to use your words when you are in the midst of a difficult situation or season? What do you want to do differently in the future?

Challenge

James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." Begin each day this week by asking God for wisdom, and then listen as he guides your conversations!

Watch Your Mouth

Your Mouth Mirrors Your Heart

Leader Check-in

What happened this week as you sought God's wisdom? How did your speech change, if at all?

Discover

What is your opinion about "following your heart" as the primary way to make decisions? Explain your answer.

Read **Matthew 12:33-37**. How would you summarize Jesus' words in one or two sentences?

What role does the heart play in regulating our speech? What other verses do you know (or can you find) that echo Jesus' teaching in Matthew 12?

Compare **Matthew 12:33-37** to **James 3:9-12**. What similarities do you notice? What differences?

What kinds of motives or emotions might be at the heart of someone who is in the habit of complaining? What about someone who is consistently grateful?

What would the speech of someone who was passionately pursuing Jesus sound like? How do you know?

Fully Own

Reflect on your speech over the last few weeks. What has your mouth been telling others about your heart?

What do you think Jesus means when he says "everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every **empty word** they have spoken,"? What impact does this statement have on you?

What can you do to ensure that the words you speak are not "empty" or "careless"?

Read **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**. How can prayer and gratitude lead to a healthier heart?

Make a list of all the things in your life for which you are grateful. How often do you meditate on these things? How much time do you spend complaining?

Challenge

Set aside a few moments each morning to pray Psalm 19:14. Journal any thoughts that God puts on your heart.

Watch Your Mouth

The Wreckage of Your Words

Leader Check-in

How did God use Psalm 19:14 to heal or shape your heart this week?

Discover

What do you typically do when the people around you begin to use their speech in a way that dishonors God?

Read Proverbs 20:19, Proverbs 26:24-28, and 1 Corinthians 5:11. Which kinds of evil speech are these passages identifying? Why do you think the Scriptures take evil speech so seriously?

Read Psalm 109:17-19. What is the difference between profanity and cursing?

Take a closer look at Psalm 109:17-19. According to the psalmist, what is the fate of those who choose to curse rather than bless?

Read Romans 12:14. How does God call us to respond to those who speak evil of us? Why is it so difficult to respond to curses with blessing?

Fully Own

Have you ever been the victim of gossip, slander, or flattery? How did this situation affect you?

Who is God challenging you to bless with your words?

Ephesians 5:4. According to this passage, what is the proper substitute for foolish talk and coarse joking?

Consider Isaiah's confession in Isaiah 6:5. What do you need to confess about your speech? Share at least one area of your speech that you desire God to clean up with your group.

Recall Proverbs 18:21 from the first week of our study. How has your understanding of this passage deepened over the last 4 weeks?

Challenge

Choose one practice that you tried out during this study to continue for the next several weeks as a way to continue taming your tongue:

- Memorizing Scripture
- Listening Prayer for Wisdom
- Praying from the Psalms