

“Set a Guard over My Mouth”

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. Psalm 141:3 - “Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.”
 - 1. Lev. 24:10-16, 22-23
 - 2. Shelomith had married a non-Israelite and it appears that her son behaved more like his father than his mother. He got into a fight with an Israelite, during which he blasphemed the name of God. For this he was bound, not for fighting, but for his speech
 - 3. Contemporary people, especially Americans have trouble understanding this. We have freedom of speech; we have adages that say, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me.” Not just words said to us, but also words we say to others
 - 4. For Israel, it was a new problem, so they took it to Moses, who in turned asked God, Who said the sentence is death
 - 5. Clearly words matter. Cursing cannot be lightly dismissed

I. CONTROLLING OUR WORDS

- A. If we can control our speech, we can control our actions - James 3:2
 - 1. Little things often have power over big things - James 3:3-4
 - 2. The unrestrained tongue causes great harm - James 3:5-6
 - 3. Fights are begun by poorly chosen words - Psalm 140:3-4
 - 4. Words can move others to sin - Prov. 7:4-5
 - 5. Words can be used to deceive others and hide danger - Prov. 29:5
- B. Controlling our speech is challenging, not impossible - James 3:7-8
 - 1. Never assume that we have it mastered - 1Cor. 10:12
- C. We sometimes treat sinful speech as acceptable or harmless - James 3:9-12
 - 1. When bad is mixed with good, all of it becomes bad.
 - 2. Even secular writers get this
 - a. “Vulgarity is no substitute for wit.” (Violet Crawley)
 - b. “Profanity is the use of strong words by weak people.” (W. J. Ward)
 - c. “If you can’t be interesting without profanity, then let’s face it: you’re not interesting.” (Michael Hyatt)

II. GUARDING THE DOOR OF OUR MOUTH

- A. If we not careful, we will sin with our mouth - Psalms 39:1
- B. Claiming to be religious and not controlling our mouth makes our religion useless - James 1:26
- C. God will judge us by every idle word - Matt. 12:36
 - 1. The words we say when we aren’t being careful about our word choices more often reflects the true us.
- D. Our words need to be useful, edifying, and encouraging
 - 1. Use words to make other people better - Eph. 4:29

2. Use words God would approve - Psalms 19:14
3. Use words that demonstrate your spirit is in control of your flesh - Psalms 17:3-5
4. Use words that are clean and wholesome - Prov. 15:4
5. Use words that dispense grace to others - Col. 4:6
6. “‘With grace’ signifies that our conversation should be courteous and agreeable, not morose and melancholy. But more than that, it should show that we are governed by the principles of the faith, and that there is genuine goodness in the heart.

This will make our speech mild, courteous, agreeable, and refined; but it will do more than even this. It will fill our discourse with the spirit of the word, showing that our souls under the influence of love for the Redeemer. Seasoned with salt, among the Greeks, was the symbol of wit, wisdom, and reason. Our conversation should be wholesome and palatable. Our conversations with others will be what they ought to be: useful, honorable, and beneficial to humankind. This does not mean that our conversation will always be about spiritual matters, but that the hearers will discern in our words that we are spiritual people. How you ought to answer everyone is not talking about having the right answer, but the manner in which the answer is given. There are other texts that address knowing the answer, but this governs the manner in which we deliver it to others.” (Adapted from Barnes Notes on Colossians 4:6)

Conclusion:

- A. “Kind words are the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can read” (Mark Twain)
- B. “For attractive lips, speak words of kindness. For lovely eyes, look for the good in people. For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry. For beautiful hair, let a child run his fingers through it once a day. The tender loving care of human beings will never become obsolete. People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed and redeemed and redeemed and redeemed.” (Sam Levenson)
- C. “The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious” (Solomon, Ecc. 10:12).
- D. “The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable” (Solomon, Prov. 10:32)
- E. “So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke the Physician describing the synagogue’s reaction to Jesus, Luke 4:22).
- F. “Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.” (King David, Psalm 141:3)