

Tighten Up Your Tongue

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[0 : 01] Romans 8, Psalm 19. We're not going to either of these just yet, but I just want to get you or save some time in a little bit so that you know where we're going and ready to go.

So Psalm 19, Romans 8, and we'll get there in just a minute. So tonight I want to just do a little, it's going to involve a little Bible study, but really kind of challenge you with something.

Because we're all professed born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We claim that God is our Father by a new birth because we've been bought with the blood of Christ, forgiven of our sins, and given new life.

And it's the life of Jesus Christ that's been imparted to us as well as the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And on and on we could go about that. And so now we have a life, a new life to live. And that life is lived out, practically lived out in several different ways.

And there's a lot of ways we could look at this, different areas of life that in some cases don't intersect at all. And what I mean is like you could be pretty good in one area and then missing or lacking in another.

[1 : 13] And you can be good at witnessing and maybe not so strong in your prayer life. Or just there's different things, different areas of the Christian life. And so you can be thriving in one and struggle with another.

And you could say that it's the heart that dictates all these areas and is overall. And I would agree. The Bible says, keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

And your heart for the word of God or your heart for a prayer time or for having a relationship with others or believers or just anything you do. Yeah, your heart dictates and controls that.

For instance, what you think, what you dwell on, what you allow to go through your mind. The Bible says the thought of foolishness is sin. And the Bible says that we're to bring every thought into captivity and to the obedience of Christ.

And so the Bible does address sometimes things about your thought life. Another area is what you watch or what you see. Where the Bible, Job says, I made a covenant with mine eyes.

[2 : 14] And David said, I'll set no wicked thing before mine eyes. And so there's verses and there's Bible characters that give us examples in that area. Another area might be what you listen to.

Another area might be what you give yourself over to, what you pursue, what your hobbies or interests are. If they're something that can bring glory to God or if it's just completely vanity. But one big area, one big area that I think it affects all of us, and it may even be bigger than all of the others in one way, is our communication and our speech.

The words that come out of our mouth. Now I realize the Bible says, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. And then it says, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.

And so I get that the heart controls it all. The heart, that's the real matter. But this thing about the mouth is addressed in the Bible far more than any of those other things I mentioned.

Far more. It's not even a close comparison. In other words, God mentions and re-mentions and states and warns and instructs about the mouth more than the thought life.

[3 : 28] More than what you look at. More than what you listen to. More than where your feet go. Don't you think we ought to put a little emphasis on that? A little bit of concern about that?

I think it's a big deal. I think the Bible evidence for this proves to us that it's a big deal to God. And it's one that we should be aware of and one that we should put some effort and some consideration into this.

Now if you're a child of God, then your walk and your talk should match that you're a child of God. And the Lord God will bring our words into judgment.

And he's not giving anybody a pass because they say that, well, I have a temper. Or because I work around the world all day long.

Or God doesn't give you passes for things like that to make excuses. And so considering the emphasis that God puts on this topic, I'd like to offer you tonight some, what I think are practical thoughts from the Word of God that can help you address this thing in your life.

[4 : 33] That can help to correct your words or at least consider what speech you have and use. And if it's not only the right variety, but if it's in the right spirit and if it's at the right time.

And so first I want to give you something that's really simple, but I think it can be very quickly overlooked as if it's not even necessary. But look at Psalm 19. In Psalm 19, verse 14, David writes and he says, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

The first thing I want you to notice is this is a prayer between a man and his God. And he's praying, not God, I pray that you'll accept the way I talk just as I am.

But no, he's saying he wants his words to be acceptable to God. He wants them to be changed. Elsewhere he says, search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me.

And so David here prays, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of thy heart be acceptable in thy sight. The first thought, it's so simple but probably overlooked as unnecessary, is to make it a matter of prayer.

[5 : 53] Just like David did. Make it a matter of prayer. You have to first desire in your heart that what you say to your, not to God, what you say to people in your life, you have to desire that God is pleased with that before you'll ever make it a matter of prayer.

If you don't think there's a problem, you won't ever be making it a matter of prayer. You'll see yourself as fine. You'll justify the things you say when you say them and make excuses for when they might not be right, but it's okay because, and then you go.

But when you make it a matter of prayer, like David did, and say, God, I want my words to be acceptable to you. I want my speech to be sound speech that cannot be condemned.

And now turn to Romans chapter 8. You got that saved. Romans chapter 8. If you're fine with the way you talk all the time, and you don't ever think you need correction in this area, then you won't feel like, or you won't feel the need, or you won't feel the desire to bring that thing before the Lord.

This thing about your speech. But look at Romans chapter 8 and verse 5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

[7 : 13] And believer, child of God, if you walk in the Spirit, you will absolutely be given consideration, and you'll be given concern to the words that come out of your mouth.

When they come out wrong, the Lord inside of you, the Spirit of God will smite you. You'll know it. You'll know I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have reacted that way. And now you need to deal with it.

But your flesh is going to say, No, you were right. And you have the right to talk like that. So my first thought, and again, it's kind of one you won't even consider, but make it a matter of prayer.

See if you can bring it before the Lord. When you don't see the need to, you won't pray about it. And your tendency will be to justify your words and always have an acceptable reason in your sight for why you can talk the way you talk.

I've gotten myself into trouble that way in my lifetime and had just a poor reputation for Jesus Christ, poor testimony, because I decided some things I can say, I can say that.

[8 : 15] I can say that. So what? I can say stuff like that. It's not a big deal. I know other Christians that talk like that, so I can talk like that. And I was justifying something that I should never have been letting come out of my mouth.

It wasn't God's Spirit guiding me or instructing me or the Word of God illuminating me to some truth. It was just me trying to fit in with other people. And I was letting my guard down and becoming a poor testimony for my Savior in the meantime.

I'm not going to turn you to all these verses here. We'll get to some of that later. So then I'd say just start by acknowledging that when your words are wrong, you need to seek the Lord's help to get it fixed.

And so making it a matter of prayer is a great place to start to be sure that your communication and your words are acceptable. Now, secondly, find James chapter 3.

James chapter 3. And we're going to get into a little Bible study here. Or at least just run some references.

[9 : 24] Secondly, don't take it lightly. That is, don't take the words you speak lightly.

You know why? Because God doesn't. And I've already established that from the beginning that He addresses our words and our speeches and things far more than anything else. I started looking up references to the tongue and to the mouth and to the lips and to speech and to speaking and just running these through the Bible and looking at how many times it comes up.

And then I crossed that against the word think or thinketh or thought or sing or something that was just a different area completely. And those references were in the 50s and 60s, but the ones to do with the tongue and the mouth and to speak, they were 150 to 500 times.

These things were just, it's not even a comparison how much God deals with this. So don't take it lightly. The words that you speak. Why? God does not take it lightly. So don't take it lightly.

The Bible says in the Proverbs that death and life are in the power of the tongue. So don't pretend that it's not a big deal. It is a great matter.

[10 : 38] And it's a matter that affects the oldest to the youngest in this place. And it will your entire life. And it already has to this date. You're affected by it. You're part of this. Everybody in here is guilty.

Everybody in here is guilty of saying something they should not have or of violating the word of God by the words that have come out of your mouth. And so nobody in here is immune to this, to sinning with your mouth.

Now, James chapter 3, and here we come against this great passage that we need to consider. It's a great warning about our tongue.

And I want to go through this whole chapter here because the whole thing is dedicated to this thought. So verse number 1 says, My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation, for in many things we offend all.

Now, let's take it to one specific area. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. Understand the word offend doesn't mean that you hurt someone's feelings.

[11 : 40] Here it means that you're an offender. Like you broke the law. You trespassed. You're guilty. So if any man offend or is not guilty or never trespasses, he's always right in his speech.

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man. That is one complete man that has no area to grow because he's got his tongue tamed. If he can keep his tongue tamed, he's arrived.

So that's what the Bible says here. Now continue reading in verse 2, And able also to bridle the whole body. Notice the word bridle. That is used here as an illustration now, but it'll come back up later.

Verse 3 says, Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm whithersoever the governor listeth.

Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

[12 : 50] Now is your mind not drawn right now to the San Gabriel Mountains or further south in Orange County and to the airport fire and to the hundreds of acres, even thousands and thousands of acres that have been destroyed by what?

What started as a little fire? Every single one of them always starts small. And we have the living best view of what this even can do here.

How dangerous the tongue is. Behold, how great a matter, a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

So is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. So now what do you think about those times where you let something fly out of your mouth that you shouldn't have and you just dismiss it as no big deal?

Now how do you feel about the words you say that aren't pleasing to God? You better recognize what Scripture says. It's got a lot to say. So I'm saying, don't take it lightly because God doesn't.

[13 : 57] The tongue is a fire. The tongue defiles the whole body. But it's no big deal. No, you're defiled in that matter before God with the words you speak.

And it's set on fire of hell. Man, don't take it lightly. Verse 7 says, For every kind of beasts and of birds and of serpents and of things in the sea is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind, but the tongue can no man tame.

It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison. And I'm going to stop there with this. I won't go the whole chapter long. But that tongue is a dangerous thing.

You ought to have gotten that by now. It is full of deadly poison. It is likened to a fire. Now it's likened to a lot of other things. And I want to take a look at some of those here and just give you a little Bible study here on this.

So turn back to the Proverbs with me. Keep your place in James if you can. We're coming back at some point. You don't have to. You can find it again. But for now, find Proverbs 26.

[15 : 02] And then we're going to run into some of the Psalms and run a few references. The tongue is dangerous. And it's something that we ought to take seriously.

I want you in Proverbs chapter 26. And what you're going to see throughout some of these Old Testament passages is that tongue, we've already heard that it was likened unto a fire and likened unto deadly poison.

Here it's going to be likened to some weapons, some deadly and dangerous weapons. Verse 18. We'll read from 18 to 23. Proverbs 26, 18.

As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor and saith him, not I in sport. Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out.

So where there is no tailbearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

[16 : 11] How does he do it? With his mouth. Verse 22. The words of a tailbearer are as wounds and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

And there's somebody hating and deceiving and speaking something, but there's abominations and hatred and deceit and you can see it going all the way down to the end of the chapter. So the tongue can be very dangerous and it can set a lot of problems off.

It can start a forest fire and here it's very similar words. It's also likened back there to, what was it? Firebrands, arrows, and death. All right, come back to Psalm 35 and we're going to run a quick little chain here of references.

And this is not exhaustive by any means. As I told you, it's, I don't even know, 1,400, 1,500 references that we could be looking at here about these verses, about the tongue, the mouth, the lips.

Psalm 35 and take a look at verse 11. I'm going to read a little chunk here, maybe down to 21. Verse 11. False witnesses did rise up.

[17 : 24] They laid to my charge things that I knew not. So they're speaking words, lying words. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth.

I humbled my soul with fasting and my prayer returned in my own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother. I bowed down heavenly as one that mourned for his mother. But in mine adversity, they rejoiced and gathered themselves together.

Yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me and I knew it not. They did tear me and ceased not. This is all with their mouth. Verse 16. With hypocritical mockers and feasts, they gnashed on me with their teeth.

And note that phrase. That again has to do with the words that they're speaking. Verse 17. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

I will give thee thanks in the great congregation. I'll praise thee among people. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me. Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without cause. For they speak not peace, but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

[18 : 30] Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me and said, Aha! Aha! Our eyes, our eye hath seen it. So I'm drawing you out just now. Their words, their mouth is against him.

Their words they speak and they're gnashing on him with their teeth is the one phrase I wanted to get out of that. Now skip ahead to chapter 37. Psalm 37, verse 12 through 14.

37, 12. The wicked plotteth against the just and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him for he seeth his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword and have bent their bow to cast down the poor and needy and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

Now how are they doing it? With their mouth. Connecting that phrase gnashing with his teeth from the previous psalm. And they're using this time a sword and a bow but it's words.

The words are likened to weapons. Turn to Psalm 38 and you're going to start seeing it more and more. Psalm 38, verse 12 through 14.

[19 : 41] They also that seek after my life lay snares for me and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things and imagine deceits all the day long but I as a deaf man heard not and I was as a dumb man that opened not his mouth thus I was as a man that heareth not and in whose mouths are no reproofs.

So see he's not replying. He's not just like the Lord Jesus Christ. This might even make a good prophecy to Calvary and as a lamb before his shears is dumb so he opened not his mouth.

And they're speaking all this evil against him and there's no response. Moving on to chapter or Psalm 42 and look at Psalm 42 verse number 10.

As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproach me while they say daily unto me where is thy God?

It's like a sword in his bones their words against him. Look at 52 and verse 2. Just a couple more here.

[20 : 53] 52 verse 2. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs like a sharp razor working deceitfully.

A sharp razor that tongue is likened unto. Moving on to Psalm 55 look at verse 21. 55, 21.

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter but war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil yet were they drawn swords.

What were drawn swords? His words. His words they're likened to arrows and to swords and to razors. Look at 58 and verse 3 through 6.

And this is something we already mentioned back in James. It comes out again in 58.3. The wicked are estranged from the womb.

[21 : 58] They go astray as soon as they be born doing what? Speaking lies. Their poison that's their lies is like the poison of a serpent. They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear which will not hearken to the voice of charmers charming never so wisely.

Break their teeth. So this is likened they're likened to serpents that have poison in their mouth and strike and inflict pain on another but they're like serpents that have no ears.

They can't hear. It's like they stop their ears. They're not listening. I'm sure you've met people like that who just speak and say things but they'll never hear any reason. They'll never consider any other side or any other angle.

It's just their rage and their own feelings that they just spit out venomous poison and not care who gets inflicted by it. And that's a wicked person likened to that their poison like the poison of a serpent but they don't hear reason.

They won't listen to truth. Look at 59 and verse 7. 59, 7. Behold, they belch out with their mouth.

[23 : 12] Swords are in their lips. Again, swords are in their lips. Once more is 64 and look at 2 through 4.

64, 2. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity who wet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows even bitter words that they may shoot in secret at the perfect.

suddenly do they shoot at him and fear not. Now what is all of these? Are all words being used as weapons. It's been likened to fire to deadly poison to razors to arrows to swords.

I think you get the idea. The point I'm making from the beginning of this was don't take it lightly. Don't take what comes out of your mouth lightly. God does not. And they can be extremely hurtful extremely damaging and when you don't care God does.

So don't take it lightly. Alright, number three. Go to Proverbs chapter 8. I think this one maybe is the best thing I can say tonight about your words.

[24 : 24] Proverbs 8. And this thought is to set a high standard for your speech.

you personally set a high standard for your speech. Look at Proverbs 8 verses 6 through 8. Here, for I will speak of excellent things and the opening of my mouth or of my lips shall be right things.

For my mouth shall speak truth and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. all the words of my mouth are in righteousness.

There is nothing froward or perverse in them. That's a passage I love. I love those three verses and they're important and they mean something to me and I don't always meet the standard but that's one I've adopted and I feel convicted about in my own walk with God is I want wickedness to be an abomination to these lips.

I want these lips to belong to Jesus Christ. He's bought me with a price why should I decide what's right for me to say and not? And so I believe it's the right thing to do is set a high standard.

[25 : 45] Don't set your standard based on what the world speaks or what your co-workers speak or what other Christians speak. You set your standard by your relationship with the word of God.

Let the Holy Spirit of God determine what's right for you to speak and what's wrong. And if you have a question a gray area a form of speech a word you're not sure then my advice is set the standard high.

Don't ever set it lower. Don't ever bend down in your standards. And the word of God is the best place to go. That passage there is worth reading again and worth considering each day before you get up and go to your work and go out into the world to consider that the words of your mouth that there's going to be nothing that comes out that's wrong.

No corrupt communications coming out today by the grace of God. And the more you get in the Bible the more Bible you get in you the more Bible is going to come out of you.

And the words of God are pure words. And these words are I mentioned it earlier what was that sound speech that cannot be condemned. These are words that are the Bible that are seasoned with or always with grace seasoned with salt.

[27 : 03] These are soft answers. These are peaceable and pure answers. And so set the standard high and be careful what you let inside of your heart because as a man thinketh in his heart so is he and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Alright one more thing I told you about James I want you to go back there and we're going to finish in the book of James maybe. And just one more little thought here one little one liner and that is tighten up your tongue.

Tighten up your tongue. It might be loose. It might be getting too loose. You might be getting a little bit of liberty with your tongue. And so tighten it up and do so by thinking before you talk.

Look at James 1 look at verse 19 Wherefore my beloved brethren let every man be swift to hear slow to speak slow to wrath.

It doesn't say be slow to think or to be slow to praise God or be slow to worship or slow to sing. It says be slow to speak.

[28 : 26] And in the context is wrath. I would say this along those lines is don't give yourself the liberty to speak freely when you're angry.

Do not give yourself the liberty. When you feel those emotions rise up that is when you need the bridle. that is when you need to be controlled.

And if you don't have a bridle look a little bit later in this chapter look at verse 26 then you're going to cause problems. Verse 26 If any man among you seem to be religious and bridled not his tongue but deceiveth his own heart this man's religion is vain.

It's implied there that the tongue needs to be bridled doesn't it? Well if he thinks he's a religious man but he can't control his own tongue doesn't even attempt to control his own tongue who's he kidding?

He's deceiving himself about how religious he really is. How righteous of a man he is. The tongue needs to be bridled or it'll get out of control. It needs to be controlled.

[29 : 37] You know when you're angry and when you're annoyed and you're emotional that's when all the filters just disappear. That's when all the prohibitors all the thoughts just kind of of what you shouldn't say just kind of it just flies out it just they go and what comes out just comes out and that's the time to put the bridle on.

That's the time to have control. When do you need to be aware or cautious? I'd say always.

Absolutely always. I hate to tell myself here I'm guilty I'm just as guilty as anybody in the room but on the way over here on the way over here about four cars literally four cars decided to not just run the red light but to make the turn as I'm first in line in the turn lane.

I had the green arrow and I started to creep and whoom whoom whoom whoom four of them and I just was like brrrr and just said something that I should have said and the Lord just right there he's like what are you going to be preaching on in 20 minutes I was like God have mercy on me it happens that fast it happens that fast he tells us there to be slow to speak and slow to wrath to bridle our tongues and I'll remind you of what we read earlier in chapter 3 in verse 2 that if any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man and that man I've never met and I don't think you have either and you're not looking at him that's for sure that man doesn't exist on this earth to my knowledge that never offends in word it was just a little bit later in that passage that the tongue can no man tame so I don't think that tongue's ever been tamed by a man on this planet now I do want to take you to two verses in Proverbs and then we'll be done so would you find

Proverbs 21 but the challenge here is from the word of God to put a bridle on that tongue and to keep that tongue and to check it and you may not be able to do it just it won't happen overnight that's absolutely true you won't just everything's gone you've got full control but ultimately this topic has to do with the work of the new man inside of you overcoming the old man it has to do with the spirit of Christ in you and you submitting to him and allowing him to number one decide what is right and then to do what is right and you will mess up but recognizing that you have a problem or that you need to fix it is probably the first step I want you in Proverbs 21 look at verse 23 where the Bible says whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue now one more verse very similar is 13 and 3

[33 : 04] Proverbs 13 3 he that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction so you will mess up and you will continue to mess up and you will have four cars try to get through the light after it's red and yours is green but recognizing and admitting that you do have to deal with this and that it is a real problem for you as much as you think it's somebody else's worse I'm not worried about them and neither should you be worried about them the only person you'll give account of is yourself before the Lord and so you better make this decision in your life to let God work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure and so I told you this to make it a matter of prayer to go before

God about this and pray that your words are acceptable in his sight I told you secondly don't take it lightly because God doesn't he talks about it so much in this book it's obvious that he doesn't take it lightly at all and then thirdly set that standard high for your speech set it way up there and say no corrupt communications coming out not tomorrow I'm going to get on my face in the morning and pray that God will help me keep my tongue and keep my soul from trouble this day and you determine that that wickedness is an abomination to your lips like the proverb said and so closing this thought off we said it from the beginning there's nobody in this place that doesn't have to deal with this the person doesn't exist so that means this is applicable to you and it may be that you're full of rage and it may be that you're just full of yourself it may be that you're full of certain words or a way of speech you picked up somewhere and it doesn't belong in your mouth as a child of God whatever the case is make it a matter of prayer seek the

Lord and decide that you're going to establish some parameters on what's right based on his word not on yours lean not to thine own understanding be not wise in thine own eyes fear the Lord depart from evil amen okay alright that's where we're going to stop and thank you for being here Lord willing we'll have a rest of a good week a little cooler weather and be back together Sunday morning to be able to worship the Lord together