

October 2009 Week 3

Watch What You Say

Are you still making negative confessions? Are you still allowing expletive or profane language to roll off your lips at random? We have received so much teaching and exciting revelation about the power of the tongue, that it seems a bit redundant to be asking these questions, but if you'll pay attention to the conversations you have on a daily basis, you'll see these questions are still very necessary.

If we're honest, we'll admit that most of the people with whom we converse will steer the conversation in the direction of judging, ridiculing, or impugning someone else. Before you know it we're joining in, doing the same thing. This is not without consequence. While you are speaking unkindly about someone else, you can be assured that someone is speaking unkindly about you.

Words mean something. Proverbs 18:21 tells us emphatically that life and death are in the power of the tongue. We can either build ourselves up or tear ourselves down by what we speak.

Some of us use what might be considered by others as offensive language just as a matter of course. We've done it so long that it is now a habit pattern; one that is difficult to break. We rationalize it by saying *"It's just the way I am. I can't help it."* This isn't the truth. If someone gave a person ten bucks for every nice word they spoke, that person's conversation would change drastically. They would be speaking praises and niceties all day long. The point I'm making here is that we can change any time we want, and in most cases we are more apt to change when we believe it will be to our advantage.

We often think that God will give us a *pass* in the area of our poor choices of language and conversation. We overlook the power of our words and the effect they have on our lives as well as on the lives of other people. This is irresponsible behavior and we have to come clean about it. We have to begin to so change our way of dealing with circumstances and people that as soon as our buttons are pushed we respond with the love of Christ. We don't have to be ooey gooey gum drops all day long, but we have to do two things, 1) recognize the situations that trick us into undermining our spirituality, and 2) develop the skills to deal with them.

Situations that undermine our spirituality are those that trick us into behaving contrary to the ways of Christ. They set us up for failure. Sometimes we say to ourselves, *"What is going on? I'm doing all the things I'm supposed to do and I'm still not getting any closer to what I desire."* Often times the culprit is your tongue. It is causing you to self-sabotage because you are either cursing yourself, another person, or your situation by the words you speak.

I'll give you an example: Sometimes, during the course of business, some of us will get a rude and obnoxious person on the phone. We think to ourselves, *"Boy!!! If I wasn't saved I'd eat you up and spit you out. I'd tell you off so bad that you'd feel like running home to your mother."* We think this in our heads because that is what is in our hearts. We may not actually speak an unkind word, but we'd like to. And then there are times when a complete stranger has the

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audacity to get so far up in our business that they presume to tell us who we are, what to do, and how to be. They may even go so far as to label us unjustly, or call us out of our names. You really don't want to take it there, but sometimes *"You better watch what you say"* bypasses the *better judgment* whistle and whirls right out of your mouth.

What do we mean when we say this, *"You better watch what you say"*? This statement is a thought out loud. It is signaling our brains, as well as the other person, that he or she is treading on shaky ground and is about to approach an area of which there is no return. Once that ground is breached, *it's on like popcorn*. You know what happens next...we unleash some words that we perhaps haven't used or thought about in years. Then, when it's all over, we regret it. We could kick ourselves because we realize that we let someone whose never given us a morsel of bread or a drink of water get to us. We gave them our power by allowing them to goad us into doing something that was beneath us.

Many of us deal with situations like this every day. Whether it's an obnoxious person or a gossiping friend, you have to recognize that no one has the power to make you do something you genuinely don't want to do. Your mouth is one of your most valuable tools. Don't let the temptation to use it unwisely cause you to continually miss your blessings. Change your strategy by first acknowledging these errors and asking for God's forgiveness.

Develop the skills to deal with them by first recognizing that your heart needs to change. It will take time, but the initial step is to ask the Lord for help. Jesus Christ is your personal savior. He knows how to steer you away from danger...away from self-sabotage. He knows when you're going to get that phone call. He knows when a friend has gossip on his or her mind. He knows when you are about to approach a situation that will hinder your blessings. Purpose in your heart to change and then ask him to head these things off. Begin your day by praying that he will intercept these kinds of attacks.

God's ways to assist you in godliness are innumerable, but you not only have to want His help in this area, you must seek it and recognize it. If you are serious about change, if becoming more like Christ is your heart's desire, you can be sure that He'll assist your efforts. Recognize those little cues that He positions in your environment. Sometimes, an unexpected interruption will cut your conversation short, or a friend will be called away right before he or she heads down the path of negativity and tries to drag you along with them. Thank God for helping you to keep your mouth closed, and before you know it, you will have developed godly finesse in this area.

Remember, the words that come out of your mouth shape and mold your reality, so watch what you say!