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Email: woody@dtgministries.org; Website: http://www.dtgministries.org  
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## Tongue Control

When it comes to doing something right, I have found that it helps to read scriptures that pertain to both the good and bad on the topic. That way I have in mind the difference and more incentive to make an effort to have control in that particular area. Having God's understanding is key, with which we all can be successful.

**James 1:26:** *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

Think about what this verse says! How many times have you heard a religious person spread gossip; or, make some other negative statement; even utter swear words? How many times have you been guilty? It is really easy, so it seems, to get caught up in gossip. Additionally, old habits die hard. One old habit that comes back on me occasionally is impatience in traffic, and downing someone because of the way they are driving. Yet later on, I will catch myself doing the same thing.

**Matthew 15:1-3, 7-11:** *1. Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,  
2. Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.  
3. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?...  
7. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,  
8. This people draws nigh unto me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.  
9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.  
10. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:  
11. Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.*

The Jews had their own interpretation of the law, and generally lived according to the letter pertaining to various things that make one unclean (touching a dead person; entering Pilate's judgment hall when they brought Jesus to trial; sitting in the same place a menstruating woman sat, etc.). But Jesus said defilement is caused by what comes out of a person's mouth. Negative reinforces negative, and positive reinforces positive - speak positively.

**Matthew 5:37:** *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these comes of evil.* How can one communicate if all they ever say is yes or no? What did Jesus mean by this statement?

**Psalms 119:169, 172:** *169. Let my cry come near before thee, O Jehovah: Give me understanding according to thy word... 172. My tongue shall speak [of is supplied, cp MKJV] thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.* God's word is what He speaks to your heart, and His righteousness is His understanding; it is the spiritual concepts He speaks to our hearts - and THAT, is what should be coming out of our mouths. Thoughts produce feelings, feelings cause us to act, our actions become habits - when a thought comes, we often react from an old habit. We are to learn to control the feelings and change our habits so that self does not rise up. Both our thoughts and God's generate feelings in the heart. We must learn to stop and consider the source, then act.

Here are some verses pertaining to the tongue:

**Negative: Proverbs 17:4:** *A wicked doer gives heed to false lips; and a liar gives ear to a naughty tongue.*  
**Proverbs 21:6:** *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*  
**Proverbs 26:28:** *A lying tongue hates those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

**Positive: Proverbs 16:1:** *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.*  
**Proverbs 21:23:** *Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles.*

**Positive & Negative: Proverbs 10:31:** *The mouth of the just brings forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.*

**Proverbs 12:18:** *There is (one) that speaks like the piercing of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*  
**Proverbs 12:19:** *The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.*

By often reading of verses like these remind us of why we are to control the tongue. Additionally, getting these ideas fixed in the mind enhances the discernment of the voice of the Spirit of God in the conscience when a situation comes up. **James 1:19-20:** *19. Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, 20. for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God (RSV).*

**James 3:3-10:** *3. Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also.*

*4. Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman wills.*

*5. So the tongue also is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire!*

*6. And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell (Greek *geenna* <sup>g1067</sup>).*

*7. For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by mankind.*

*8. But the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison.*

*9. Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God:*

*10. out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. (ASV - read the whole chapter often)*

Did you ever see a person's face become red because of anger? Thus we have the idioms "fired up, on fire, hot under the collar, burning with anger." Christians usually control the public explosions, but what about at home? What about the subtle gossip or shady jokes? Again, old habits die hard and it takes time to break them. We can help each other by sharing how God is helping in our personal lives and encouraging others.

**Proverbs 15:2:** *The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.*

The choice of what to speak should come from God's understanding. Let us break the habits that are destroying the soul, so that *we all attain unto the unity of the faith and the Son of God's knowledge, unto a spiritually mature individual, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (cf Eph 4:13 enhanced). Amen.