

*"In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word was
with God, and the
Word was God."
~John 1:1*

The Lord's Flock
Growth
DIGEST
PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES



“Wash Your Mouth With Soap”

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“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland,, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Genesis 1:1-3)

With the word of God, He created everything in the heavens and on earth: the sky, the dry land, the sea, the plants, the birds, the animals, and man.

- **John 1:1** – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*
- **John 1:14** – *And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.”*
- **Matthew 1:21** – *“She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”* Jesus is the living Word that God promised. He is the living Word who lived among us and became a human being like us.
- **Romans 4:16-21** – **All the promises of God in His Words will materialize for those who have faith in Him.** However, faith without action is dead. When we were chosen to be his people, He gave us the power from above, the Holy Spirit, to witness for Him. To witness and proclaim, we must use our mouth; but we must be careful with the words that we say.
- **Proverbs 18:21** – *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue; those who make it a friend shall eat its fruit.”*
- **1 Corinthians 12:4-12** – **There are different kinds of spiritual gifts including oral gifts that need the use of our mouth.** Among these are prophesy or expressing the word of God, speaking in tongues enabling us to speak in different languages, and interpretation of tongues. There are also the gifts of preaching or proclaiming, exhortation, and teaching (Romans 12:6-8) as well as the gift of prophets (Ephesians 4:11). These are the many reasons why the use of the mouth is very important.
- **Mark 16:17-18** - *“These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”* We need to use our mouth to pray over, to cast out demons, to rebuke sickness from the body, and to declare healing. What we say therefore is important.
- **Romans 10:10** – *“For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.”* We must confess what we believe in.

- **Hebrews 4:12** – *“Indeed the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between souls and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.”*
- **Ephesians 6:17** – *“And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* We have been authorized to use this weapon. We need the mouth to speak against the enemy and to verbalize what we believe in order to cast out the devil.
- **Mark 11:23** – *“Amen, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for him.”* We must believe in what we pray for and trust that we can move mountains which symbolize our struggles and obstacles in living a life for Christ. The Lord reminds us that we have the power over financial, physical, and emotional trials no matter how difficult they may be. We can overcome these tests through our trust in God’s words.
- **Matthew 10:19** – *“When they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say.”* The Holy Spirit gives us the power of words; He will speak through us. It is therefore essential to keep our mouth clean. The Holy Spirit will not use us if our mouth is unclean especially when we gossip, backbite, slander, and harm others. Let us therefore wash our mouth with “soap” – the word of God.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** - *“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”* We should know the word of God that we can use as “soap” to wash our mouth.
- **Romans 8:26-27** – *“In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.”* We need our mouth to communicate with God when we pray.
- **1Corinthians 3:16** – *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”* We can readily pray to the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and intercedes for us. He also convicts us and make us feel remorse when we do something wrong and sinful.

POWER OF THE TONGUE (James 3:1-12)

We have to be very careful what comes out of our tongue (mouth). The tongue is powerful. Only what is good and refreshing should come out of our mouth; profanities should not!

“For from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matthew 12:34). Let us therefore make sure that our heart is a *natural heart*, not a *stony* one (Ezekiel 36:26). Our heart should be like the pure heart of Jesus.

“...The tongue is also a fire. It exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body and setting the entire course of our lives on fire, itself set on fire by Gehenna. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing...” (James 3:6-10)

“There are six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to him; Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that plots wicked schemes, feet that run swiftly to evil, The false witness who utters lies, and he who sows discord among brothers.” (Proverbs 6:16-19)

WHEN YOU SHOULD NOT OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND KEEP IT SHUT

The following are biblical guidelines to help us control and master our tongue (and mouth):

1. Do not open your mouth in the heat of your anger.

“He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from trouble.” (Proverbs 21:23)

“Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger, and do not leave room for the devil.” (Ephesians 4:26-27)

“No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. [And] be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.” (Ephesians 4:29-32)

“Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” (James 1:19)

2. Do not open your mouth when you do not have all the facts.

“He who answers before he hears – his is folly and shame.” (Proverbs 18:13)

3. Do not open your mouth when you have not verified the story.

“The testimony of two or three witnesses is required for putting a person to death; no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.” (Deuteronomy 17:6)

4. Do not open your mouth if your words will offend a weaker brother.

“When you sin in this way against your brothers and wound their consciences, weak as they are, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause my brother to sin.” (1 Corinthians 8:12-13)

5. Do not open your mouth if your words will be a poor reflection of the Lord to your friends and family.

“For nightmares come with many cares, and a fool’s utterance with many words. When you make a vow to God, delay not its fulfillment. For God has no pleasure in fools; fulfill what you have vowed. You had better not make a vow that make it and not fulfil it. Let not your utterances make you guilty, and say not before his representative, ‘It was a mistake,’ lest God be angered by such words and destroy the works of your hands. Rather, fear God!” (Ecclesiastes. 5:2-6)

6. Do not open your mouth when you are tempted to make light of holy things.

“Be not hasty in your utterance and let not your heart be quick to make a promise in God’s presence. God is in heaven and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few. For nightmares come with many cares, so a fool’s utterance with many words.” (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2)

7. Do not open your mouth when you are tempted to joke about sin.

“Guilt lodges in the tents of the arrogant, but favour in the house of the just.” (Proverbs 14:9)

8. Do not open your mouth when you will be ashamed of your words later.

“Sincere are all the words of my mouth, no one of them is wily or crooked.” (Proverbs 8:8)

9. **Do not open your mouth if your words will convey a wrong impression on someone.**

10. **Do not open your mouth if the issue is none of your business.**

11. **Do not open your mouth when you are tempted to tell an outright lie.**

“There are six things the Lord hates, yes seven are an abomination to him; Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that plots wicked schemes, feet that run swiftly to evil, The false witness who utters lies, and he who sows discord among brothers.”
(Proverbs 6:16-19)

12. **Do not open your mouth if your words will damage someone’s reputation.**

“A scoundrel is a furnace of evil, and on his lips there is a scorching fire.” (Proverbs 16:27)

“When he was insulted, he returned no insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten; instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly.” (1Peter 2:23)

13. **Do not open your mouth if your words will destroy a friendship.**

“An intriguer sows discord, and a talebearer separates bosom friends.” (Proverbs 16:28,)

14. **Do not open your mouth when you are feeling critical.**

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

15. **Do not open your mouth if you cannot speak without yelling.**

“Like an open city with no defences is the man with no check on his feelings.” (Proverbs 25:28)

16. **Do not open your mouth when it is time for you to listen.**

“Hear me, O coastlands, listen, O distant peoples.” (Isaiah 49:1)

17. **Be careful with what you say when you open your mouth for you will have to eat of its “fruit”.**

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue; those who make it a friend shall eat its fruit.” (Proverbs 18:21)

18. **Do not open your mouth if you already said something more than one time.**

19. **Do not open your mouth when you are tempted to flatter a weaker or conceited person.**

“He who says to the wicked man, ‘You are just’ – men will curse him, people will denounce him.” (Proverbs 24:24)

20. **Do not open your mouth when you are tempted to accuse the elders wrongly.**

“Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching.” (1 Timothy 5:17)

21. **Do not open your mouth when you are supposed to be working instead of talking.**

“In all labor there is profit, but mere talk tends only to penury.” (Proverbs 14:23)

22. Do not open your mouth when you are anxious, tired, disappointed, and you want to complain.

“Do everything without grumbling or questioning.” (Philippians 2:14)

We get into trouble through gossips, lying, deceiving others, speaking in anger, selfishness, pride, complaining, foul language, swearing, and abusive words.

Let us pray for wisdom from the Holy Spirit on how we can master our mouth. He reminds us to control everything that we say.

HOW TO MASTER OUR MOUTH

1. Hold your tongue.

Our tongue is very slippery and is positioned in our body where it is hard to grasp. It slips away and the next thing we know, we have already hurt other people with our words. Thus, we need to learn when and when not to open our mouth.

- *“Like choice silver is the just man’s tongue; the heart of the wicked is of little worth.” (Proverbs 10:19)*
- *“He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from trouble.” (Proverbs 21:23)*

2. Think before you speak.

Once we have wronged a person by uttering hurtful words, we can no longer take back what we have said because we have already caused damage and pain to the person.

- *“The just man weighs well his utterance, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil.” (Proverbs 15:28)*

3. Learn to listen before speaking.

- *“He who answers before he hears – his is the folly and shame.” (Proverbs 18:13).*
- *“Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” (James 1:19).*

4. Let your mouth be filled with wise words.

The words of the wise are very encouraging. Let everything that we say be good and helpful so that our words will serve as encouragement to those who hear them.

- *“An encouraging word cheers a person up.” (Proverbs 12:25).*

Let everything we say be good and helpful so that it encourages others.

- *“No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29).*

How often do our words encourage and build those around us? Not just some of the time or just some of the words, but every time and every day, our words should be something that build up or edify people.

- *“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.”* (Psalm 118:24).

We should always witness for the glory of God. No matter how trivial we think our testimony can be, through witnessing we can touch other people’s lives one way or another.

Let us be careful with what we confess by being in accord with the word of God. Hold on to the word of God all throughout the day even for things that do not go our way. There will be rough days at times, but remember the Lord makes each day, and God the Father shows Himself strong in our behalf.

The Lord has control of everything. *“God’s love endures forever.”* (Psalms 136:1-26). Why should we fear? Let us always remember the good words of our Lord.

- *“Give us a wise counsel on the emotional side of controlling our frustration. He who has knowledge, spares his words.”* (Proverbs 17:27).

Let us always remember to ask the Lord for wisdom before we say something.

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