

James 3:3-12

# *Taming the Tongue*

Daily devotionals

The title and the ideas are taken from:

*30 Days to Taming Your Tongue*

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

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## Introduction

One of the reasons why Jesus was so effective in His preaching and teaching is His careful selection and appropriate use of words. Luke mentions that people who listened to Jesus' teaching were at amazement and all of them spoke well of Him, because His words were so gracious (Luke 4:22). Even his opponents agree on this (Luke 22:21) and they had a hard time dealing with people leaving them for Jesus. As disciples of Jesus and as people who have an upward call to grow up to 'Him who is the head' (Ephesians 4:15) we have to learn from him to tame our tongue to use the right words at the right time. We are assured that we all will stumble in many ways. Yet words are so important because by our words we will be acquitted, and by our words we will be condemned (Matthew 12:37). Not only that, a single loose word could endanger us to the fire of hell (Matthew 5:22). Let us remember as we go through these lessons; a word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver (Proverbs 25:11), and pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones (Proverbs 16:24). We have a responsibility because words are indeed the overflow of what is in our heart (Matthew 12:34-35). Enjoy and have a good time reading this, because we are all in the same boat.

Love,

Benny Soza, Cochin

*Day 1*

(Date :.....)

## The Lying Tongue – Part 1

### Proverbs 12:22

Lies destroy relationship with God and with people. Lying makes us insecure. We lose our confidence. God hates a lying lip. There are different forms of lying: deceitfulness, half-truths, exaggerations and flattery.

### **Deceitfulness**

#### **1 Peter 3:10**

A deceitful lip makes our life miserable and shortens our good days – warns Peter. Remember what Jacob (name means deceiver) has done with Esau? He and his mother agreed together to deceive his father in order to get the birthrights of his brother Esau. Dressed up like Esau, he approached Isaac his father to get the blessing belonged to his elder brother. Later Esau came to know about the deception and there was anger and bitterness, Esau wanted to kill Jacob. Jacob had to run away to a distant land, working under his uncle. The story goes on and we see Jacob is getting deceived by his uncle many times. Life was miserable, happy days did not last for many days.

#### **Psalm 55:23**

What makes you deceitful? We tend to be deceitful when we don't trust in the Lord. It is like slapping God.

### **Half Truths**

Integrity is derived from the mathematical word 'integer,' means a whole number and not a fraction of a number. Integrity is telling the whole truth not just a fraction or part of the truth.

Getting late to the office or college/school tests our integrity. I was searching for the keys, or books.... The bus/auto was late.... The traffic blocks... Or coming back home late and we tell others, I was with friends... special class... etc etc. I am trying to make myself believe that I am right when I tell half truths. It is also shifting the blame on others in most cases.

#### **Job 27:5**

Isn't it great to be speaking "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"?

*Day 2*

(Date :.....)

## The Lying Tongue – Part 2

### **Exaggerating**

Inflating a story to get the attention of the listeners is very common. Exaggeration may seem harmless, but it is another form of lie. A person who is in a habit of exaggerating will lose his credibility over the time, people will not believe in what he says. Do you remember the story of the shepherd boy who called out 'danger, danger' when there was no danger? When the 'danger' finally came, no one believed him, none came to save him.

#### **Revelation 21:8**

We might get into the centre of attraction by exaggerating things, but God has decided the fate of all liars

#### **Proverbs 8:7-8**

## **Flattering**

While exaggerating is mostly to do with ourselves, flattering is to do with others in practice.

### **Jude 1:16**

Flattering is to receive favors from others. Giving praises which others don't deserve.

### **Psalm 5:12**

The children of God are not to do things in this way. God gave favor to Esther and she was chosen to be the queen Persia. God gave Daniel the favor before the king's official in the matter of abstaining from unclean food. God gave Joseph favor before Pharaoh, so that he became the second in command after Pharaoh. A child of God depends on God himself, and not on techniques.

Remember you can only influence people of low esteem by flattering them; you cannot influence the ones who know what they are doing. Because flattery feeds on negative emotions. Only when we feel overlooked, unappreciated, and unattractive or having any other negative emotion which Satan brings – flattering enters into our system. This is the same with others. Emotionally healthy people appreciate sincere compliments.

Also remember people use flattery as a survival tactic, to cover up their failures and faults and to earn gains unmerited.

### **Psalm 12:3,**

### **Job 32:21-22**

## *Day 3*

(Date :.....)

## **The Manipulating Tongue**

### **Judges 16:15**

Samson was a man chosen by God, he was a strong warrior. God chose him to deliver Israelites from the cruelty of Philistines. God blessed Samson with supernatural physical strength and abilities. The secret of his strength was hidden in his grown hair.

The downfall of Samson started when he fell in attraction with a greedy, cunning Philistine woman named Delilah. After many manipulative efforts, she finally leaked out from Samson the secret of his great strength. She shaved his head and robbed the God given strength off him.

Manipulation is a crafty use of the tongue. It has lasting effects. Remember how Satan manipulated Eve towards his way, to disobey God? Manipulators get excited each time they become successful in their 'smooth operation'. In the end they lose all their credibility.

Jesus confronted those people who tried to manipulate him to say something against the Roman government. They came to him with lots of praises and appreciation and finally asked him "is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (Luke 20:22-23) Jesus asked them "why do you test me?" He shared his wisdom with them and put to shame their crafty ways.

We never read of Jesus manipulating anybody, even when he was facing death. He spoke the truth all the time. As God's children, let us not practice or tolerate such behavior.

*Day 4*

(Date :.....)

## The Hasty Tongue

### Proverbs 29:20

Have you ever put your tongue in action before activating your brain first? And regret later? No matter how innocent we are, we end up hurting somebody because of our hasty speech.

### James 3:2

May be you are trying to ease the tension by inserting some humor. May be you are saying something to console someone going through pain. But the end result is increasing the pain.

### Proverbs 18:13

Do you respond and say something before the other person finished saying and thus miss out the real point?

### Ecclesiastes 5:2

Solomon warns us against making a hasty response to the Lord also. We cannot ignore something we said in a hurry by saying it is a mistake. We know the story of Jephthah the judge who made a hasty vow before God (Judges 11:30-40).

Keep your words smooth, because you may have to swallow it later, just in case!

"Stop, think and pray before you speak" saves you from accidents.

### James 1:19

May be this is why God gave us two ears and one mouth.

Time is something that once gone, can never be recovered – so is a word, once uttered cannot be recovered. Take time to weigh words before we throw them at others.

*Day 5*

(Date :.....)

## The Divisive Tongue

### Matthew 5:9

Divide and rule is the best effective weapon of Satan on human beings. Divisiveness destroy the effectiveness of any effort undertaken by two or more people – be it a family or a family of God. Satan knows how effective it could be when two people agree with each other. (Mt 18:19)

It is sad some people enjoy being 'peace-breakers'. Question is, ARE YOU one?

### Proverbs 6:19

Talks about seven things God hates. One among them is 'a man who stirs up dissension among brothers'

### Ephesians 4:3

Paul urges the believers to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Keeping peace requires tremendous effort, humility and godliness. Peace exists in clarity.

Clarity is when you bring out what is hidden. There cannot be clarity with quite reservations.

Clarity is when you address issues, not when you tolerate sin. Addressing sin with the scriptural truth disturbs peace for a time being, yet it produces solid peace and unity.

Clarity is when you open up your doubts, fears and anxieties. Not when you assume or think other person knows everything. 'Others should understand me without I am telling them about it' is plainly pride. There cannot be clarity in this.

Remember feelings are temporary; it can not stay for a long time. But if you are not open about your temporary feelings, you are bound to make those feelings stay for ever as a lasting conviction.

Let us not forget the warning from the Lord in Hebrews 12:15

## Day 6

(Date :.....)

# The Argumentative Tongue

## Proverbs 20:3

While divisive people enjoys destruction of unity, argumentative people enjoys putting others down. Being argumentative is a futile use of the tongue and certainly not the right way to win friends or influence people.

When we argue we are not learning, there is no chance for us to get corrected or to get better. We became better at something by observing, discussing and learning not by arguing.

Some people think arguing is normal, because they might have grown up in such background.

Others think by arguing they add to their value or self-worth. A quarreler's job is not to add value into someone's life, but to put that person defending. No one gains anything by arguing.

## Proverbs 17:14.

Let us heed Solomon's advice in here.

One way of responding to a quarreler may be to say "Okay, that is your opinion."

## Matthew 5:25

Jesus asks us to 'settle matters quickly with your adversary'.

As children of God we need to learn to disagree without getting into a quarrel. We cannot agree with what some of the things an unbeliever says, when it come to matters that affect our salvation. We need to be firm yet gentle at the same time.

Benjamin Franklin used to say, 'On this point, I agree. But on the other, if you don't mind, may I take exception?'

## Day 7

(Date :.....)

# The Boasting Tongue

## Proverbs 27:2

Boasting takes place when we forget God. We started thinking that we earned all that we possess by our own hard work and capabilities.

See what King Nebuchadnezzar did. This is what he said to himself one day as he was strolling on the roof of his palace - boast about himself. (Daniel 4:30)

God acted immediately. The king was thrown away from the throne; he was left in the open field by himself. His hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. He was mentally ill. Only after the king acknowledged God as the ruler of everything, God restored the king's sanity and the kingdom.

Hear his testimony in Daniel 4:34-35.

Studying the fate of proud men in the Bible could keep us humble.

See the statement made by Paul (kept framed in his office, may be): "Who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Talents we have are given by God, only for his name to be glorified.

Remember that praise is like a perfume. You may apply little of it on you. But if you consume it, it will kill you!

## 1 Corinthians 15:10

*Day 8*

(Date :.....)

## The Self-Deprecating Tongue

### Exodus 4:10

When you self-deprecate, you minimize your self worth in an unjust manner. This is the other end of being boastful. Satan makes us feel useless, not worth trying anything. So you blew all the possible chances in life.

Self-deprecating sounds very similar to humility, yet in reality, it is the rejection of faith and the Word of God (Philippians 4:13). What you call yourself is very important.

In Luke 8:30 Jesus confronts this attitude in the demon possessed man. Jesus asked his name and he answered "legion". Legion is not the name of this person, but it is the temporary situation he is going through – possessing a number of demons. The sad part is this man has taken a temporary condition into a permanent reality.

We tend to take the temporary phases we go through for a permanent reality. Failing one time does never mean you will fail every attempt. Falling once never mean you will fall all the time. We need to trust in God's strength which 'always' leads us into a triumphal procession (2 Corinthian 2:14)

Self-deprecation displeases God, because it origins from negative emotions and not from faith. God was upset with Moses when he complained about his improper speech. (Exodus 4:11-12)

Without God, we can do nothing anyway, but with him all things are possible. Let's believe this and keep our head high in all situations.

*Day 9*

(Date :.....)

## The Slandering Tongue

### Proverbs 10:18

Slandering is making malicious, false, or even true statements about others with the intent of damaging his/her reputation, character, or good name. Commonly we see with the politicians, but it is not limited to politicians, however. Church is also not different in some ways. Anyone can be tempted to do this.

One thing guaranteed is there could be no slanderers in heaven (Psalm 15:1-3)

Remember a time when you made a comment that could damage someone's name? What made you to do that?

Diotrephes, a New Testament church leader found himself in an insecure situation. Apostle John recommended some teaches to speak in this church. And Diotrephes felt threatened about his predominance. So he refused to associate with them. John was quite upset about with this behavior and explained to friend Gaius how he planned to deal with it. (See 3 John 1:10)

Insecurity about your capabilities, being threatened in your position, lack of humility to be involved in a team effort etc makes you to slander others. Resorting to slander is clear evidence that one has not embraced certain of God's promises, like;

### Psalm 75:6-7

No one can exalt a man, but God.

### Isaiah 14:27

No one can change God's plans.

God gives us security and rewards. So when we slander, we sins against God.

### Proverbs 13:3

*Day 10*

(Date :.....)

## The Gossiping Tongue

### Proverbs 18: 8

Talking about others private affairs is a popular past time. But God says it is like the tasty peace of food – like one we put in the rat trap – and it is impossible to resist. Now we know why we feel so irresistible to talk about others' affairs sometimes!

When we gossip, we are not walking in integrity. We feel best about ourselves, as well as God; when do things that are pleasing to God. He created us for His pleasure. So before you carry that peace of information, looking forward for someone to share with, think, why do you do this? Is this the only way by which we can make friendship? In fact we are becoming the trash bins of others stinking sins! When we are focused on our life and mission, we will not have time to carry around others waste.

### Proverbs 20:19

Make a decision to stay away, make it public that you will not involve in it anymore

Lets not become *busybody* in other people's matters.

### Psalm 19:14

*Day 11*

(Date :.....)

## The Meddling Tongue

### 2 Thessalonians 3:11

Meddling is unwelcoming interference into someone's personal or private matters. Unlike gossip, meddling is directly into the person. "How much does this cost?" "What was the conversation?" "How could you buy this?"

Not everyone who makes such inquiries is meddling; many are sincerely trying to help others. Now how do we know we are at the safe side? We have to ask our heart – 'why I need this information?'

### Proverbs 26:17

Ear is the most sensitive part in a dog's body; and if you pick it by ears, you are sure to get a bite. Similarly putting our nose into others business, rewards us a negative response.

Now if you are a parent or some one in that position, you will have to intervene into some situations. Don't be afraid of negative attitudes of rejection. But be gentle and sensitive. For adult children, we need to give space for learning also.

### 1 Peter 4:15

Remember meddling is a sin. Yet at the same time if you have to get involve, check the motives first and pray for the purpose.

Someone said; 'people who mind their own business are successful, because they have so little competition.' What do you think about that?

*Day 12*

(Date :.....)

## The Betraying Tongue

### Proverbs 11:13

Betrayal is more of cheating a person with his personal, sensitive matters, which can put him into danger. Gossip may not push the person into danger, but it brings shame. While betrayal is giving confidential details to an enemy for misusing it.

Judas was able to betray Jesus with very little effort because he was familiar with His comings and goings (John18:2). Judas had very detailed information about Jesus life and habits. Also he enjoyed the freedom of walking into Jesus life with no restrictions. But his end was destructive. Betraying someone takes away our self-worth and dignity.

Do you have an unresolved conflict with someone? Have you betrayed his confidence? Are you still living in this sin or have you repented of this?

On the other hand, has someone betrayed your confidence? How did you feel? Are you still angry with that person?

Learning to apologize and learning to forgive are essential in Christian life. We get stuck and live in slavery if you are unable to do both.

### Romans 8:28

Remember God makes everything good.

Decide today to live a trustworthy life and be grateful to God if you have a trustworthy friend.

*Day 13*

(Date :.....)

## The Belittling Tongue

### Ephesians 4:29

Do people feel better about themselves after spending time with you? Or they go away discouraged?

### 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Do you feel insecure that you can only feel good about yourself when you put down others?

Hammers are useful in building as well as demolishing. Words are also like this – it can tear down or it can build up. We can conquer belittling by finding things and ways to encourage others. A positive encouragement with a little holding of hand, lots of communications etc are magical in relationships. At office or home, it increases the productivity and loyalty.

Tell your wife/husband or children how important they are for you. Tell your wife you are the only woman in your life. Appreciate husband for his sense of responsibility. Lift up the teenagers for the little things they do. Thank your friend for being loyal to you.

Remember God's affirmation, 'you are precious and honored in my sight and I love you.'

*Day 14*

(Date :.....)

## The Cynical Tongue

### Psalm 1:1

Eliab, David's oldest brother was a true cynic. David was sent to the battle and was indignant with the Philistine's insults at God. David was very secure with his God, this was not so with Eliab. See his comments in 1 Samuel 17:28. He scorned David's confidence and his motives.

A person with cynicism scorns the motives of others. It is like venom that affects both the cynic and the other. You can't find a cynic alone, there will be a number of others also found around. It creates a mess in relationships in any environment. Being cynical sometimes brings forth some friends, but it might not be a deeper friendship. Befriending a cynic put us into destructive situations.

Let us be truly blessed because we don't walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners nor sit in the seat of the mockers. (Psalm 1:1)

*Day 15*

(Date :.....)

## The Know-It-All Tongue

### Proverbs 12:23

Are you a person who gives free advices – without someone asking? Are you a person who considers your opinions as the best ones – that everyone should follow it? Do you regularly use the term, "You should..."

### Proverbs 12:23

Even if you are the rightful person to give advice, and you know what is best – offer it sensitively. Commanding pushes even friends to back off from you. (For married woman here is one point – men are not looking for a mother in a wife.)

How do we handle this issue? Let someone talk to you about something you already have a better idea. Do not interfere in their talk. This is training in humility and emotional maturity.

If you tend to be a know-it-all, may be you need to consider the following. Is your display of knowledge a smoke screen for insecurity? Are you looking for appreciation or attention because you are not getting it from the sources you desire?

When you interact, keep your words simple, listen actively, ask for their ideas, and resist the tendency to correct. Your interpersonal relationships will improve in better ways.

*Day 16*

(Date :.....)

## The Harsh Tongue

### Proverbs 15:1

Impatient, frustrated, lack of productivity, pressures etc mostly lead us to make those harsh remarks. Harsh remarks seldom yield positive results.

According to Solomon, the wise woman has the 'law of kindness' on her tongue (proverbs 31:26). Speaking kindly to others is one of the core principles of success.

When we think about it, we have no right to be harsh. Because God is not harsh with us, and He is our father and we ought to imitate him. As God was graceful towards us, we are called to extent the grace of God to others.

Yes this does not mean that we are to bury our head in sand and refuse to deal with problems and situations. Before we approach to deal, we have to go to God and get his words (Isaiah 55:11). Harshness can not bring forth God's justice.

Harsh words never die, and they can impact a person for a lifetime. Many who are considered society's outcasts today have been victims of verbal abuse at some point during their lives. It could be from parents, teachers, insecure spouses or their leaders.

### Proverbs 16:32

Says he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. Remember cutting or chopping cannot be recovered, words cannot be taken back. And if harshness is said about as your character trait, then go to God and seek the power of Holy Spirit and scriptures for deliverance. Remember the "law of kindness" to be on your tongue.

*Day 17*

(Date :.....)

## The Tactless Tongue

### Colossians 4:6

Daniel and his three friends are in a great problem. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon conquered their land and had taken them captive. The king had selected some intelligent and good looking men to train them in the royal service. The problem was, the king's menu was not in conformation with the food laws of these Jewish brothers. How Daniel handled this deadly situation so tactfully, without even a hint of rebelliousness. (Daniel 1:8)

Daniel had so much conviction about not taking part in the 'unclean' food served in the King's table; he had tactfully gained permission to follow an alternative plan – a vegetarian menu with no wine. God gave him favor with the head training official, and granted Daniel a great success and a permanent solution. We will always get more benefits with diplomacy than tactlessness.

As disciples honesty is the best policy and we cannot add or deduct anything from it. But it never gives us license to say whatever we want to say. One of the most important skills we need to develop is the ability to deal with hard truths in difficult and problematic situations. Because some truths itself are brutal and painful (Job 6:25). The amount of pain each person go through when they are told the truth depends on many things like; emotional security, self-worth and the desire to grow. So tactfulness is different with different situations and people.

### John 1:17

Jesus never allowed his graciousness to stop him to tell the truth. Godlessness is when are deliberately tactless. We do that out of anger, frustration, disappointment, retaliation etc.

Think twice before you speak and let the Holy Spirit guide you.

*Day 18*

(Date :.....)

## The Intimidating Tongue

### 1 Samuel 17:44

Goliath thought killing David was going to be a piece of cake. So the verbal intimidation came freely from his tongue. The standard tactics of an intimidator come from Goliath; name calling, threatening words, putting David down etc. But David's response was different. David declared his faith in God in front of his intimidating enemy.

### 1 Samuel 17:45-46

The intimidating tongue uses words to put the person on the other end to frighten and be insecure. Shouting is a usual way intimidating. When we decide to fear only God, no one can intimidate us.

God has never meant for anyone to oppress or dominate another person. In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the fish, birds and animals – not over each other. (Genesis 1:28)

Verbal intimidation can have a severe physical and emotional impact on others, like headaches, anxiety, nervousness, insomnia, stress, fatigue, low self-esteem, and depression. This is not how God want his children to behave with each other. Intimidating can only bring forth silent rebellion at home, or office or personal relationships.

If you tend to intimidate others, it is time to think why you need that control over others? Many who fall into this grew up in negative, chaotic backgrounds where they felt at lost about their circumstances. Or it may be covering up of deeper insecurities and sins. These things are to be walked over.

*Day 19*

(Date :.....)

## The Rude Tongue

### Isaiah 35:8

Imagine our highways filled with nice, decent drivers! No swearing, no bad words, no yelling, no making faces, no abuses!

What makes someone to be rude? Is it because we don't have enough time? Too many things and too little time? Lack of patience? Demanding life – boss, spouse, children, others? No discipline? Spoiled children? Stress of daily life?

Showing patience has becoming a rare phenomenon. Ill mannered, discourteous communication becoming the standard practice. Being rude to someone could spoil their entire day.

The 'golden rule' is often forgotten (Luke 6:31). Because people don't have enough time to think about others. People are so consumed about themselves. We see people speak so loudly on the mobile in public places so that others are disturbed. Attending phone call during church services or other meetings and appointments etc.

### 1 Corinthians 13:4-5.

Our love for God and the desire to represent him can have an impact on our day-to-day behavior.

What if someone is rude to us? Do not be the nice chap who takes everything. Do let the person know what he is doing – but sensitively? "Hard day, huh?" is a gentle question which does the job. Do not let people to get away by being rude because they will make it as a practice. Also do not let them to pull you into their harshness by being harsh like them.

Retaliation belongs to the Lord.

*Day 20*

(Date :.....)

## The Judgmental Tongue

### Matthew 7:1-2

Jesus gave a hard time to the Judgmental Pharisees. They want to strain the gnat with everything Jesus do or say. See Jesus response in:

### John 8:15-16

Judgmental people engage in a fault finding assessment of another person's behavior. Just because the other is not doing what he would have done in the same situation? We judge other with their '*actions*' and with our '*intentions*'.

We may find the person walking slowly in front of us as a lazy, loitering person. Because we know only our ways, either be 'intense' or be 'off'. Others can be different. Their thinking may not be same as what we are thinking about a given issue. Lots of time, judgments base solely on rumors. We hear something and we make the judgment.

### Matthew 7:3-5

Jesus based his judgment on people's behavior based on nothing other than Gods standard. This is the only basis on which we can righteously judge. We will be good at it when we do it first with ourselves. Pray for those who do not walk in conformity with God's standards, address the behavior with genuine interest and with a helping hand.

*Day 21*

(Date :.....)

## The Self-absorbed Tongue

### Philippians 2:4

Haman, a Persian government official mentioned in the book of Esther, gives a great model of self-absorption. (Esther 5:11). It looks like the entire world goes around him, his vast wealth, his many sons, his heavy connections, and his placement with the king. He never gets bored of talking about himself.

What consumes most of your conversation with others?

How do you feel when you are talking to someone who always ends up talking about that person's problems only? Trying to have a close relationship with a self-absorbed person in like trying to hug a porcupine.

Sometimes we can get carried away in our fellowship with the thought of finding a more important person to chat with. So our eyes goes this way and that way even when we fellowship. Fellowship will be so beautiful and meaningful when we give full attention.

If you have to address self-absorption in a person, do so with persistence because self-absorption dies hard. If you are struggling with this, redirect it to the Heavenly Shepherd and take help so that your needs can be met with. Strive for deeper relationships with undivided attention.

*Day 22*

(Date :.....)

## The Cursing Tongue

### James 3:10

Have you ever wondered why non-glorifying words jump out of your mouth or at least come to the tip of the tongue? Like someone said to justify the bad words came out of that person's mouth – 'these words are in the Bible'. If that is what you are like, you are not allowing the Holy Spirit to tame your tongue.

### James 3:8-9

Using irreverent, obscene or vulgar language is not a decoration for a child of God. People use profane or non-glorifying words to express their anger and frustration, because they think godly words are not expressive enough. Do you use bad words silently? Stub your toe, breaking something valuable, upset a stack of papers, spill a drink, burn a dish or encounter an extremely difficult situation? It will not come out for sure, but...it's at the tip of the tongue.

### Luke 6:45

Words will not slip out of the tongue, but it slips out of the heart. We need to go to God in fasting and prayer to tame this evil.

Remember that words are verbal thoughts. We are not falling into it accidentally, but we nurture it carefully.

*Day 23*

(Date :.....)

## The Complaining Tongue

### Psalm 142:1-2

The five daughters of Zelophehad had a problem. Their father had died in the wilderness before the Israelites came into the Promised Land. Zelophehad did not have any sons to inherit his portion of the land, and the law did not provide for woman to receive the son's portion instead. So these sisters, not having a father, brother, husband, son or any man in their immediate family are in real trouble. What did they do? Complain about God and Moses and about the system to everybody else? (Numbers 27). No, they went to the right authority and spoke their real problem. And the solution was, Moses taking it up to God and Him giving them the right answer.

What if they were grumbling and complaining against Moses and against the Laws? They would have lost their lives as well.

A real issue can be solved, only if it is taken to the right authority. Many people miss out on this and they go around and talk and get many people involved in that unnecessarily. This is ungodly. In the opening scripture, the Psalmist channels his complaint to the one who can bring about real solution – God.

Do you get tempted to join in a complaining party, so that you don't get isolated? Like some wives sitting together with complaints about husbands? Or the husbands doing vice versa? We are responsible to do two things with a person who is complaining; one is to help the person by taking to the solution and the second one is to help the person to see the other side of the coin.

*Day 24*

(Date :.....)

## The Retaliating Tongue

### 1 Peter 3:9

There is nothing as easy as verbal retaliation. The pleasure of it is momentary but the guilt it brings stays for a long time. Satan presents before us every opportunity to retaliate and react.

The root meaning of 'retaliate' is to 'return the punishment.'

### Romans 12:17-19

If I am retaliating, I am ignoring the urge of the Holy Spirit to be submissive to God's discipline and rebel against the Lord's rights.

When we think about what Jesus would do or say if he was in the very situation we are in, we would overcome this sin. As we are called to imitate Christ and grow up to him, let's keep in pace with him and grow ten feet tall in what he would do.

*Day 25*

(Date :.....)

## The Accusing Tongue

### Revelation 12:10

Things were not going in favor of Job. He lost his children, his health, and his wealth. To add more pain his friends started accusing him of pride, envy and a host of other character failings (Job 22). They came to sympathize with him, yet they wanted to find a reason in his failing for the suffering he goes through. While Job knew he walked in complete integrity. These false accusations were more terrible for him to bear.

Have you ever charged someone with wrong doing before you established evidence of his guilt? When you do so, you fall into the same pattern as Satan, the official accuser of children of God. See how God confronted Adam and Eve when they willfully disobeyed Him in the Garden of Eden. God could have easily said 'how dare you disobey me you ungrateful sinners, I should never have trusted you in my Garden!'

### Genesis 3:9-11

God knew already what answers they are going to give. Even then God gave Adam an opportunity to explain his behavior. Asking a clarifying question and listening to the response are key steps in overcoming an accusing tongue. Ask and listen.

When you get accused falsely, the best thing to do is to give it over to God. If the accusation has affected someone you know, you may explain to him that it is not true. Do not waste your energy trying to find the source of the lie. The source of all the lies is one – Satan. God is your vindicator; He will always do a great job.

*Day 26*

(Date :.....)

## The Discouraging Tongue

### Job 29:24

A great number of individuals have missed their destiny because of someone's discouraging words. Teachers dashed the dreams of students who are mediocre in their grades. Family members dissuade one of their ambitions. Employer to employee etc. Have you ever dampened someone's hope, confidence or enthusiasm by raising objections to his plans? It happens when we lack faith in God's ability to 'do more than we can ever ask or imagine' (Ephesians 3:20)

Consider how a discouraging report brought disastrous trouble on Israelites. When they were on the brink of entering into the Promised Land, Moses sends a team of 12 men to explore the land. There they saw everything in extreme abundance. It took two men to carry a cluster of grape! They also noticed an obstacle, giant-sized men. Turning back, Joshua and Caleb encouraged the Israelites to proceed to conquer the land but the other ten were not fired-up about this.

### Numbers 13:31-33

In spite of all the efforts and miracle done by God, a great number of people believed the discouraging report. (Numbers 14:36-38). Not only that, God asked the entire community to turn to the desert and wander through the desert for forty years! If only the ten had chosen to encourage the crowd!

This would never mean you should not question the validity of the ideas of day dreamers. But at the same time think about the magical results created in you when you were encouraged by someone.

In a world plagued with negativity, everyone needs a little encouragement from time to time. If someone is discouraging you unjustly, we have the responsibility to tell them that your eyes are fixed on God.

*Day 27*

(Date :.....)

## The Doubting Tongue

### Mark 11:23

We can be so confident in matters affecting others, but when it comes to us we could be wreaking ourselves. We can assure every one, 'everything will be alright'. But saying that to ourselves is not easy.

If we ever hope to tame a doubting tongue, we must become familiar with the promises of God. Not only that, but also declaring it with our mouth. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). The more we talk about our unbelief, the more we become rooted in it. But when we declare our faith more, the more our faith increases.

Words of doubt come out of an unbelieving heart. When we tend to act in self-confidence, doubts originate.

### Proverbs 28:26

Says, 'he who trusts in himself is a fool.'

If you are struggling with doubts in some areas of your life, go to the scriptures; find promises of God that could fight with this doubt. Read, by-heart, reiterate over and over and over again so that you could make the scripture as your conviction.

Children of God live by faith in Him. Do not be a 'Doubting Thomas' who could only believe his own sight and trust his own touch (John 20:25). God cannot be pleased with this.

*Day 28*

(Date :.....)

## The Loquacious Tongue

### Proverbs 10:19

Do you know someone who seemed to have diarrhea of the mouth? The talk goes on and on and on, from one topic to another? The word for this tongue is 'loquacious tongue', or in other words 'talkative tongue.' It is said about mostly woman who miss out the 'stop' sign, yet it is true with some men also.

It does not mean everyone needs to be a 'silent lamb' but should lead you to be quiet

### 1 Thessalonians 4:11

If you have a gift to talk to people with their active attention on you, do talk about God and the wealth of the scriptures. This may lead many to righteousness.

You may be a man or woman of few words, yet when it comes to talk about God, you need to love to talk

*Day 29*

(Date :.....)

## The Indiscreet Tongue

### Proverbs 2:11

After the great flood that destroyed most of the earth, Noah planted a vineyard. One day he got drunk and was lying down naked. When Noah's son Ham saw him in his tent, he went and told this to two of his brothers. (Genesis 9:22) The other sons Shem and Japheth took a garment, walked backward and covered their fathers nakedness, they did not look at Noah. Their discretion was a sign of maturity.

The discreet person shows prudence and wise self-restraint in speech and behavior.

Ham's indiscretion was costly for him. Noah later came to know what Ham did and the result was a curse on Ham.

It is not discreet for us to talk about other's secrets which we had found out and exposing it to everyone, rather we need to deal with that.

In church, we live in a close knit community. You might happen to see the 'naked truth' of some of our leaders or other disciples. Remember God put you there for a reason; He wants you to do what Nathan has done to David. (2 Samuel 12). Public announcements of others sins may cause severe damages to the body of Christ.

It is God's responsibility to punish the leader, because the leader was chosen by him. Same thing goes with a child of God.



## DAILY TONGUE EVALUATION CHECKLIST:

1. Did I engage in any form of lying?
2. Did I flatter someone?
3. Did I manipulate someone for my gain or advantage?
4. Did I speak too hastily?
5. Did my words cause division?
6. Was I argumentative or contentious?
7. Did I boast or speak with pride?
8. Did I engage in a self put-down?
9. Did I slander someone?
10. Did I gossip?
11. Did I meddle in anybody's affairs?
12. Did I betray someone's trust?
13. Did I belittle someone?
14. Was I cynical, scornful or sarcastic?
15. Did I speak as a know-it-all?
16. Did I use harsh or abusive words?
17. Did I fail to speak with tact or diplomacy?
18. Did I attempt to intimidate with my words?
19. Was I rude?
20. Was I critical or judgmental?
21. Was I self-absorbed in my conversation?
22. Did I use profanity?
23. Did I complain?
24. Did I retaliate?
25. Did I accuse someone?
26. Was I discouraging?
27. Did I express doubt and unbelief?
28. Did I simply talk too much?
29. Was I indiscreet in my discussions?
30. Did I keep silent when I should have communicated?