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**God CAN
Control
Our Tongues**

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Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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Just when you vowed you would never start another argument, your friend begins to tell you why the Dallas Cowboys will never make it to the Super Bowl again (and that's an issue of eternal importance!)

For a while, you just listen, then like a bomb you explode. In a matter of seconds, you have destroyed your testimony over a hypothetical football argument, and the very lips which had shared with that friend how to come to Christ, explode with hostility. You have literally destroyed your witness, with the sparks of an arguing tongue.

Three of the neighborhood ladies are in for coffee. One of them begins telling about a church she visited last Sunday that really ministered to her life. Before you realize what you have done, you have added your input to the conversation. You begin telling her why that church will never measure up to yours, and how their music is too traditional or too contemporary, or their budget too extravagant, or their buildings too modern. You didn't mean to offend her, but you did. You just unconsciously, out of habit, were prone to give a bad report.

You're at work, trying to be a missionary on the job. Everyone there knows you're a Christian. You've invited the whole work force at one time or another to visit your church, and they all know where you stand on the key issues of the day.

Then one day, a number of people are standing around discussing another employee who is also a Christian, but who sees things a little differently than you, and you just can't keep quiet.

You just have to share that you think his pastor's motives are a little borne of greed. Silence grips the group. Your witness dissolves in a sea of disbelief; you destroyed it with the sparks of a judgmental tongue.

One of the main targets of your prayer life is your boss. You

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just know if he would come to Christ, what an impact he could have on his part of the business community. You've shared your faith with him before, and he has shown some interest. Then one day, you turn to a fellow employee and grumble about the fact that you're not getting raises fast enough, and that the company's policies are just not fair. You look around to see who else is listening; no one else is, except the boss. In one fell swoop, you crater your credibility, and you don't help your job security, either, all because of a murmuring tongue.

You come home from work, and your wife asks you what you think of her new dress. "Dear," you reply, "that's the prettiest thing you ever bought." "Makes you look like a movie star," you add, just pouring it on, she leaves the room, and your daughter comes in and her first question is, "What do you think of Mother's new dress?"

You make a face that looks like you have just swallowed a bottle of dill pickle juice. "You gotta be kidding" you groan, "looks like something from another planet." You add, "But don't tell your mother I said so." She doesn't have to, mother heard it all. And chances are she'll never believe you again. Her confidence in your honesty crumbled; the victim of a flattering and a lying tongue.

Why is it that we so often lose control of what we say and in the process wound the very ones we are trying to win or the very ones we would never want to hurt? We lose control because we cannot control our tongues. We hurt those we are trying to minister to, because they are the ones the enemy wants to be affected. So he places us in situations where he knows our tongues will be likely to start a fire. He knows, as well as we should by now, that the tongue is indeed the fire no man can tame.

James says it's a perpetual flame-thrower setting brushfires wherever we go. The world, James adds, is totally confused. One minute we are using our tongues to praise God or to testify of His love. The next minute, James goes on, we are cursing or arguing or boasting to those made in His very image. One minute blessing...the next cursing. One minute building up... the next minute tearing down. One minute glorifying God...the next bringing reproach to His name and to His Kingdom. "Beloved," James adds, "this ought not so to be."

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In these past few lessons, as we have journeyed through Proverbs and scanned the pages of the rest of Scripture concerning our tongues, we have concluded as always, the Word to be perfectly accurate. Our tongues ARE flames of fire, setting on fire forests of lives, and as James added, they are set on fire by hell itself.

We have looked at the sparks of an arguing tongue, a boastful tongue, a tongue that gives a bad report, a murmuring tongue, a judging tongue, and a lying tongue. In every case, it has proved to be true. Left to ourselves, we would allow our tongues to literally destroy the character, the reputation, and the spiritual openness of those very lives God wants most for us to be witnesses to. The tongue literally is the fire that no man can tame.

Now, as we close this chapter in our study of self-control, we will look together at a few more of the sparks that unmanaged tongues are prone to set. And we will look in closing at the ray of sunshine that waits to flood our lives, breaking through the clouds of discouragement that so plague us when we have allowed our tongues to go out of control.

We all admit, or at least many of us do, that God is turning knowledge into wisdom. Though we are learning more about the devastation our tongues can cause, we are also learning more about how God wants to change those patterns; “until whatsoever things are pure, lovely, of good report, worthy of praise, worthy of virtue, these are the things we are to think about and talk about.” The tongue IS a fire no man can tame, but that does not mean our tongues are not tamable. God delights to do what man cannot do. While no man can tame the tongue, God can!!! And God will, if we will but let HIM.

We cannot pass on to another stage of Proverbs, until we, at least in passing, touch on some other very devastating sparks that at least on occasion fly unexpectedly from our lips, and falling on the dry ground around us, flare up into full-fledged forest fires, claiming untold lives and leaving behind a wealth of debris.

The first of those ties in with the study of lying. It is the spark of a flattering tongue. Flattery is the ultimate lie. The man or woman who flatters is, in effect, using another’s need for self-esteem as a stepping stone for their own best interests.

Defined, flattery is artificially exalting another for personal

gain or acceptance.

The husband, in the illustration a few moments ago, flattered his wife rather than telling her the truth. It was a lie, but it was the ultimate, sugarcoated kind of lie, and flattery almost always backfires. Listen to what the Scriptures, and Proverbs in particular, have to say about the sparks of a flattering tongue. I'll give you the principle first, then the passage.

Principle 1- Flattery injures the person you flatter.

...a flattering mouth works ruin (Proverbs 26:28b NIV)

Flattery is a form of hatred, and wounds cruelly.

(Proverbs 26:28 TLB)

You aren't really helping that guy by telling him what a great job he is doing (if he's not doing a great job.)

Principle 2- Flattery also injures the flatterer.

Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his feet.

(Proverbs 29:5 NIV)

You saw in our illustration today, the flatterer is soon found out to be insincere, and now his credibility is gone. He has spread a net beneath his feet, and then fallen in his own net.

Principle 3- Flattery reveals a deceitful heart. (As always the tongue is a picture book of the heart.)

Help, Lord, for the godly are no more; the faithful have vanished from among men.

Everyone lies to his neighbor; their flattering lips speak with deception.

May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue (Psalm 12:1-3 NIV)

The tongue, remember, is no more than the loudspeaker of the heart. If we continue to deceive with flattery, we are only broadcasting the signals of a heart that longs to deceive. That truth is further amplified in Proverbs 26, where our next principle is unfolded.

Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart. (Proverbs 26:23 NIV)

You are just hiding the real material, the Psalmist is saying, but you can't hide the real material. Sooner or later the vessel breaks; and beneath the glaze is a heart of deception.

A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit, (Proverbs 26:24 NIV)

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Principle 4- Flattering lips will be found out.

This is the same principle as found in so many other sins: sooner or later the real “you” surfaces. God sees to it.

Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart.

His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. (Proverbs 26:25-28 NIV)

So those who flatter are simply spreading a net for themselves. The sugarcoating wears off, and the whole world sees not only the real meaning of what you said, but the world sees an intent to deceive, and since you represent the GOD of eternity, (Who always tells the truth), and since you claim to despise the deceiver (who is God’s eternal enemy), the world is confused. Can you blame them? Here are some other principles in passing about flattering lips.

Principle 5- Frankness is kinder than flattery.

He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue. (Proverbs 28:23 NIV)

In the end, people appreciate frankness more than flattery. (Proverbs 28:23 TLB)

It means that flattery is the easy way out, particularly in counseling or discipleship. Tell them what they want to hear, and you temporarily gain their admiration, until they find out what you’ve told them isn’t true, then they feel cheated. They would have, in the long run, been far more blessed had you simply told them the truth.

A man looking for a job would be far better off if he were told by an honest Christian employer why he isn’t qualified for the job, than to be flattered into thinking he has all the qualifications, and then just never be hired; or to be hired for a job he cannot do.

Speak the truth in love, Beloved; it’s far kinder than sugarcoated words that are not true.

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Principle 6- Flattery is unacceptable to God. Job 32:21-22

God doesn't like it when you flatter men or when you flatter HIM. He's not impressed with glowing words of praise that hide a deceitful or disobedient heart. What impresses God is a pure heart, not flowery compliments as we pray. He wants to be worshipped. But remember, HE does not hear our words alone. To HIM our words are amplifiers; He reads the signals of the heart. So don't flatter God; honor God with an honest heart that speaks honest words.

They did flatter Him with their mouth; their heart was not right with Him. (Psalm 78:36)

Principle 7- Flattery is a temptation to those seeking public office or acclaim. (Daniel 11:21,32)

It's the way to temporarily pretend to care for other's needs, in order to gain a platform to meet your own.

Principle 8- Flattery is tempting to the ego, and often leads to moral compromise. (Proverbs 2:16, 5:3, 7:5,21) It's the way to seduce, because it's the way to deceive.

Principle 9- Flattery is especially unacceptable from the lips of spiritual leaders. (Galatians 1:10, and 1 Thessalonians 2:5)

So flattering lips are harmful to the one being flattered, and harmful to the flatterer; they broadcast the signals of a deceitful heart, and always end up boomeranging back to the one who is meaning to deceive. What GOD wants, and what men need is honesty and openness, not flattery and deceit. Tell the truth, and tell it in love, or just keep quiet; but don't use sugarcoated words to get what you want. What you'll end up getting is hurt, and so will everyone else.

Flattery is a spark... and when released from the lips of a Christian, fires result that end up consuming relationships and testimonies. God has a simple cure for flattery. He says, "Stop it."

Some verses to ponder as we pass on to another subject, would be these. Study them this week.

I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away. (Job 32:21,22 NIV)

Never once did we try to win you with flattery... (1 Thessalonians 2:5 TLB)

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I urge you brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the minds of naive people. (Romans 16:17,18 NIV)

So much for the sparks of a flattering tongue.

The second spark we must try to extinguish as we pass through our closing fire drill is the spark of a gossiping tongue. What is gossip?

- Gossip is communicating unnecessary information at the possible cost of the character or reputation of another.
- It is using the tongue as an underground radio station. It is sharing information about another without their presence or their consent.
- It is a three-way conversation with one-third missing.
- It is unauthorized meddling, (sometimes masqueraded as spiritual concern)
- It is discussing anything about another, the context of which would be altered were he or she present.
- It is a vial of poison waiting to be released into the body of Christ.
- It is anything, true or untrue, shared about another which is unauthorized or unnecessary.
- Gossip is an unacceptable intrusion into another's privacy at the expense of their reputation.

Gossip is not some new invention of modern society. The Scripture is filled with words of warning about the fires that gossiping tongues can set. Listen to the passages and the principles on gossip, first from Proverbs, then from the rest of the Word.

Principle #1- THE WORLD LOVES GOSSIP

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. (Proverbs 18:8 NIV)

What dainty morsels rumors are. They are eaten with great relish. (Proverbs 18:8 TLB)

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Satan's world thrives on the juicy tidbits about "you-know-who." Our Sunday newspapers now have a full-color pullout section designed to do nothing but appeal to man's desire to know the latest and the ugliest about the world's "beautiful people." And Christians may tuck it under the religious section so no one will know, but they read it, too. Best-selling tabloid newspapers stand at the checkout counter of every supermarket blaring headlines about the private lives of the famous and the fabulous. And sell they do, because rumors are dainty morsels, eaten with great relish. God said that long ago.

Principle #2- GOSSIP IS DESTRUCTIVE BECAUSE IT IS UNDEFENDED TESTIMONY.

Any story sounds true until someone tells the other side
and sets the record straight. (Proverbs 18:17 TLB)

Can you imagine a Court of law admitting testimony without giving the defendant a right to tell his side? Neither can God. That's why gossip is so deadly. It only tells one side of the story.

"Did you know Jim left Mary?" NOOOOOOO...he didn't.

"No," Jim, might add (if he were there), "and did you know Mary had a gun to his head when he left?" An extreme illustration, perhaps, but the principle is the same. Once again, we don't have all the facts. So we aren't qualified to pass on part of the information.

Principle #3- GOSSIP DESTROYS FRIENDSHIPS

An evil man sows strife; gossip separates the best of friends.
(Proverbs 16:28 NIV)

A good way to end a friendship is to violate a friend's confidence or destroy a friend's reputation. One reason some people have so much trouble building relationships is because they cannot keep their mouths shut. No one wants to confide in the publisher of an underground newspaper, and that's what gossipers are.

Principle #4- NEVER CONFIDE IN A KNOWN GOSSIP

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too
much. (Proverbs 20:19 NIV)

Don't tell your secrets to a gossip unless you want them
broadcast to the world. (Proverbs 20:19 TLB)

If you know someone to have no ability to lock the gate of his

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mouth, then don't entrust the prized possessions of your secrets to him. In only a matter of minutes, they will escape.

Principle #5- GOSSIP DISSOLVES PEACE AND REPLACES IT WITH TENSION.

Fire goes out for lack of fuel; and tensions disappear when gossip stops. (Proverbs 26:20 TLB)

In other words, one way to stop tension is to get rid of the gossip in the crowd. Their very presence makes others feel ill at ease, for everyone wears a mask around a gossip, lest he or she pick up some tidbit they can reproduce into a full-fledged tale of interest to a world that is hungry for the sensational (whether or not it is true.)

Principle #6- THERE IS A WAY TO STOP GOSSIP: DON'T LISTEN; AND DON'T REPEAT IT.

...a man with good sense holds his tongue;
a gossip goes around spreading rumors, while a trustworthy man tries to quiet them. (Proverbs 11:12b,13 TLB)

So the key to stopping gossip is not only to not participate, but to try to stop it at its source. Our responsibility is to a) not repeat it, b) not even listen to it, and c) try to quiet the gossiper and force them to realize what they are doing. So much gossip is disguised under the umbrella of Christian concern. You know the dialogue.

"I'm so sorry about what happened to Mary." "Oh, you didn't hear?...well you simply must pray for her. You see, last week, one day when she got home from work, etc., etc., etc."

That's not concern; that's gossip! If you're concerned, go to Mary. If you're burdened, go to God. Otherwise, button your lip. God did not appoint you to be His ambassador of bad tidings in the name of generating prayer support. If you want someone to pray for Mary, share an anonymous need without details. God will understand, and He will honor their concern, and your integrity.

Principle #7- GOD HONORS THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO WILL NOT LISTEN TO GOSSIP.

Lord, who may go and find refuge and shelter in your tabernacle up on your Holy hill?

Anyone who leads a blameless life and is truly sincere, anyone who refuses to slander others, does not listen; to gossip, never harms his neighbor. (Psalm 15:1,2 TLB)

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You see, God takes gossip seriously. When you gossip, you are violating the confidence of one of His precious saints, and you are damaging the testimony of your life. God honors the believer's life who refuses to listen to or pass on gossip.

Principle #8- BEING A GOSSIP MAY DISQUALIFY YOUR FAMILY FROM SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP.

If someone in your family is a known gossip, it's possible you cannot serve well in church leadership, for the family that cannot keep confidences cannot be entrusted to hear them.

(Deacon's) Their wives must be thoughtful, not heavy drinkers, not gossipers, but faithful in everything they do.

(I Timothy 3:11 TLB)

And finally, principle #9- THERE IS A CURE FOR GOSSIP: FILL YOUR IDLE TIME WITH HARD WORK.

1 Timothy 5:9-14 describes widows in the church who might be qualified for a special role in the church's ministries, but it excludes some of the younger widows in verses 11-14 because they might have too much idle time, and spend their time going from house to house gossiping.

We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy, but busybodies.

Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

(II Thessalonians 3:11,12 NIV)

Even while we were still there with you we gave you this rule: he who does not work shall not eat.

Yet we hear that some of you are living in laziness, refusing to work, and wasting your time in gossiping.

In the name of the LORD Jesus Christ, we appeal to such people—we command them; to quiet down, get to work and earn their own living.

(II Thessalonians 3:10-12 TLB)

Gossip is often a fruit of idleness, and God has a cure for it. It's spelled h-a-r-d w-o-r-k, and it works every time. Women who don't clean house have more time to gossip on the phone. One cure is to turn off the phone and clean house!

So, Beloved, stop gossiping. It is never acceptable to God. What you just heard about Joe from Jim may or may not be true, and it may or may not be any of your business. If it is your business, go see Joe and ask him. If it is not your business,

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ask Jim not to tell you any more of Joe's business without Joe present to defend himself. In either case, don't be accountable by passing it on to anyone else. Gossip is a cancer that infests the body of Christ, but it is a cancer with a known cure, and you and I are part of that cure.

We will touch quickly on sarcasm. Let me just share some passages from Living Proverbs.

Some people like to make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise soothe and heal. (Proverbs 12:18 TLB)

Mocking the poor is mocking the God who made them. HE will punish those who rejoice at other's misfortunes. (Proverbs 17:5 TLB)

Mockers and rebels shall be severely punished. (Proverbs 19:29 TLB)

Being happy-go-lucky around a person whose heart is heavy is as bad as stealing his jacket in cold weather or rubbing salt in his wounds. (Proverbs 25:20 TLB)

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. (Proverbs 15:1, 4 NIV)

We can capsule these passages. What they say is this: The tongue was never meant to be a razor, cutting people apart with witticisms and clever barbs. The tongue was meant to be a sensitive instrument of healing, of growing, of encouraging. The mocker, the one who mocks others or their misfortunes, faces discipline, as does the one whose sheer insensitivity allows them to make light or make fun at times when seriousness is called for.

The tongue of God's man or woman should be characterized by gentleness and consideration. Sarcasm has no place in the God-centered vocabulary. It is a change some of us need to make. We have a terrible problem in the Christian community: We make light of so many "heavy" things that people do not know what is really heavy.

One last area... where sparks fly and fires result... and the book of Proverbs says very little directly about it, but the New Testament is painfully clear. It's the area of impurity or obscenity. We read this:

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Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

(Ephesians 4:29 NIV)

Don't use bad language. (How's that for clear?) Say only what is good and helpful to those you are talking to, and what will give them a blessing.

(Ephesians 4:29 TLB)

Dirty stories, foul talk, and course jokes-these are not for you. Instead, remind each other of God's goodness and be thankful.

(Ephesians 5:4 TLB)

But now is the time to cast off and throw away all these rotten garments of anger, hatred, cursing, and dirty language. (Throw them away; discard them for good.)

(Colossians 3:8 TLB)

God has not called us to be dirty minded and full of lust, but to be holy and clean.

(I Thessalonians 4:7 TLB)

We live in a Christian world where "separation" is a bad word, and where "compromise" in the name of "relating" is the in thing. Today some preachers even use bad language from the pulpit to attract attention and let their congregation know they're just "one of the guys." Christian leaders smile at dirty jokes and even pass on a few of their own, so those they "would witness to" won't consider them too otherworldly to be real. And in the process of "relating" what we really do is to dishonor the holiness of God by implying that smut is acceptable, by implying that God honors impurity in the name of spirituality, and that's all a lie. The Scripture is clear.

No dirty stories! No foul talk! No abusive language!

No off-color innuendos...ever!

No impure speech of any kind is acceptable from the lips of one who claims to belong to the GOD whose NAME is HOLY!

As he who called us is HOLY, so ought we to be in all manner of conversation... every aspect of our behavior is to say to the world. "MY GOD IS HOLY"; therefore, I DESPISE IMPURITY. Nothing confuses the world or young believers like foulmouthed Christians.

I can never forget the first time I was on a mission trip and a group of the most respected men I had ever known was gathered together at the airport, when one of the men told an off-color joke, and the whole group laughed. I was a young Christian,

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and I was confused. Before I came to Christ, I had a foul mouth, and I had thought it to be unacceptable to God. Then when I heard these men, whom I so looked up to, think dirty jokes were still acceptable, I was cratered. I then simply assumed that God didn't mind as long as you kept it moderate. Maybe it helped you "relate" to compromise just a little.

My friend, you know what God's standard is for the Christian's tongue? HOLINESS! Absolute HOLINESS! We are not called to relate through compromise. We are called to lovingly, (not condescendingly) but lovingly, draw attention to HIS holiness by being uncompromisingly HOLY in our conversation. So the next time your peers gather round to tell dirty jokes, excuse yourself. Don't listen... don't laugh... don't participate; not because you are judging them, but because you are calling them to meet your God; THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL; THE GOD WHOSE NAME IS PURE!

So there we have a few more of those sparks that so easily set afire the forests of men's lives that surround us, and cause us to be responsible for causing others to say... "what kind of God do these people serve? Their lips are fountains that first pour forth praise to God, then from those same lips come boasting, murmuring, and lying." They say we are confused about God. Who would want to serve a God whose life pours out such inconsistency? They do not know it is not our God who is inconsistent; it is our obedience that is inconsistent. They ARE confused, and we ARE responsible. Thus, we return to the basic issue with which this section of Proverbs began... the issue of self-control; and with this study of the tongue, our study of self-control comes to a close.

The entire issue is one, you may remember, of choice. God never asks us to do something that HE in us cannot do. The power to do it is not in us, but in HIM. If HE is in us, there is nothing we cannot do. THE KEY TO IT ALL IS CHOICE. You and I must, on a second by second basis, make choices with the will responding to the Word over the objections of the emotions and the appetites. That's GODLY SELF CONTROL!

We must exercise the sundown principle every night. We must examine the responses of that day and accept God's grace and mercy. Every morning we must begin again, laying ourselves at HIS feet and asking for a new outpouring of His Divine Power for

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that day. If we do not begin again every day, Satan will destroy our sense of confidence by majoring on the endlessness of our failures. God commissioned us to live one day at a time. Twenty four hours is our maximum assignment. We have the faith to believe HIM for one day, and that is our calling.

Secondly, we must exercise the second hand of choice. We must deliberately choose to control our tongues, not daily, but minute by minute. You slip and say what you wish you hadn't. You don't wait for sundown. You stop right then and ask God for forgiveness. If you've offended someone else, you go immediately and ask their forgiveness, then the next instant, when you are tempted to say whatever it is that might start a fire in another's life, you stop, and you pray quickly, LORD YOU CONTROL MY TONGUE, and HE will!! (IF you stop and ask HIM; IF You exercise the Second Hand of Choice!)

Remember, the final key to self-control is the principle of overcoming evil with good. Just rejecting sin leaves a vacuum. You fill that vacuum with the opposite quality of godliness, and the desire to do evil eventually evaporates. But if you simply place a lid over the sin and hold on, eventually, given the right set of circumstances, the lid will blow off. Our calling is not to be lid-holders, but life-changers. Life-changers replace the negatives with the positives, the old life doesn't simply vanish in a sea of emptiness. The old life dissolves as it is replaced gradually, but continually, with the new.

So the key—the real key—to controlling the tongue, is a process we will call CRG. (Just what you need, another Christian formula.) Anyway, CRG is not a new brand of computer. There may be one by that name, but CRG stands for Continuous Release of Godliness. CRG means you combine the second hand of choice with the principle of overcoming evil, and turn it into a practical, daily, hourly, exercise in GODLY SELF CONTROL!

Here is how we exercise CRG. First, we take our list of those ungodly fires from the tongue, and find the corresponding opposite quality that God wants to release in our lives in place of those sparks. God not only wants us to STOP throwing the sparks, He wants us to start using our lips to water the soil of men's lives so that not only will there not be fires, but there will be growth, change, transformation, and power as a result of everything we say.

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- God is not out to silence our lips...God is out to convert our lips.
- God is not out to cut out our tongues...God is out to set free our tongues to bless rather than to curse.
- God wants to USE our tongues as instruments of praise, of holiness, of joy, and of power.

So, the key issue is not what can we keep from saying? The key issue is how can what we are to stop saying, motivate us to say instead what will change the world? We are not to be overcome with evil, that's true, WE ARE TO OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD...THAT'S EQUALLY TRUE!

So let's very quickly make a chart just as a sample, so we can see what qualities God would release from our lips in place of the sparks we have been majoring on for so many lessons.

SPARKS	CRG (Continuous Release of Godliness)	PASSAGE
Arguing	Peace	Matthew 5:9; Proverbs 11:12; Romans 12:18
Bad Report	Love	Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 1:9; I Corinthians 13
Murmuring	Joy	John 15:11; Proverbs 15:4; James 1:2
Boasting	Humility	Philippians 2:3; Proverbs 7:1,2; I Peter 5:5,6
Judging	Patience	Galatians 5:22, Proverbs 8:17; Ephesians 4:2
Lying	Truth	Ephesians 4:15; Proverbs 6:17-19; John 14:6
Flattery	Integrity	Romans 12:17; Proverbs 26:28; Philippians 4:8
Gossip	Kindness	Ephesians 4:32; Proverbs 26:20; Romans 12:10
Sarcasm	Gentleness	James 3:17; Proverbs 26:22; Galatians 5:22
Impurity	Holiness	I Peter 1:15, Ephesians 4:29; I Thessalonians 4:7

God CAN Control Our Tongues

These are obviously only samples. You can surely come up with a much better one. But the idea is this: If you want to see your tongue legitimately transformed, the key is that you translate your weaknesses into strength by God's Grace.

First, you list the sparks that set lives aflame. We've listed arguing, bad report, murmuring, boasting, judging, lying, flattery, gossip, sarcasm, and impurity. Then under each, we have listed at least one verse that we found in Proverbs or elsewhere that specifically calls that use of the tongue sin. Therefore, when we are tempted to justify that it's okay to argue, the Holy Spirit can quickly put that to rest. We know its sin. Proverbs 6:17-19 tells us that, period.

But we won't stop there...God hasn't told us just to stop arguing. We are to stop arguing, so we can learn to speak peace to our neighbor. Matthew 5:9 says, "Blessed are the Peace makers, for they will be called the Sons of God". The issue isn't "How can I stop arguing?" The issue is "How can I be a peacemaker?" Well, for one thing, I have to stop arguing, but that's the negative. Continuous Release of Godliness means that the Spirit of Peace must so permeate my life that every time I am tempted to argue, I must stop, and call upon the Holy Spirit, whose fruit issues forth in peace, and quietly yield my tongue into HIS control. HE in me will not argue, so I don't have to fight that battle. My battle was in the choice. Once I have made the choice to exercise CRG, God takes over from there.

If I'm tempted to give a bad report, the same principle holds true. I have listed Proverbs 11:9 to remind me that the giving of a bad report is not God's way, but that's the negative side.

Instead, I want to demonstrate CRG (the continuous Release of Godliness), which is LOVE. Philippians 4:8 says whatsoever things are of good report, whatsoever things are lovely, so I stop and choose to yield my tongue to the Holy Spirit so He can speak love through me to those around me. The choice is not simply to stop giving bad reports. That's just the beginning. The choice is to begin demonstrating love through a positive expression of praise.

If I'm tempted to murmur, I memorize Proverbs 15:4, but that's the negative. God doesn't want me to murmur. He wants me to demonstrate CRG...a continuous release of godliness... and instead of murmuring; HE wants me to release JOY! So I

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claim John 15:11 and James 1:2, and know that the very things I would murmur over are, in fact, opportunities to exercise a spirit of joy and thus demonstrate to the world a continuous release of godliness.

Boasting? Same principle...the answer is not simply to restrain our boastful tongues...the answer is to reflect a spirit of humility, claiming Philippians 2:3 and 1 Peter 5:5-6, So when we are tempted to boast, we CHOOSE to turn instead to God and ask Him to speak through us a word of humility, to demonstrate the Mind of Christ instead. So the key is not restraint, the key is release. The restraint is only to free the spirit to release the flow of Godliness that He is waiting to pour out of our lips. You can fill in the rest yourself. As an example, we contrasted judging with patience, and chose to claim Galatians 5:22 and Ephesians 4:2. Instead of lying, we chose to ask for truth and claimed Ephesians 4:15, and John 14:6. Instead of flattery, integrity, and Romans 12:17 and Philippians 4:8. Instead of gossip, kindness, and Ephesians 4:32 and Romans 12:10 seemed appropriate to apply. Instead of sarcasm, gentleness, and we claim James 3:17 and Galatians 5:22. Instead of impurity, holiness, and I Peter 1:15 and I Thessalonians 4:7 seemed to apply.

The key is that you let God speak to you from His Word and develop your own CRG guide. Find your own verses, and specifically ask HIM to use every occasion Satan gives you to misuse your tongue as a stepping stone to call on God for a continuous release of His godliness, exercising through you the quality that is the antithesis of that which Satan is tempting you to say.

Thus, every time Satan tempts you to sin with the tongue, he is instead prompting you to release godliness, which is the last thing he wants to do. So once again, he means it for evil; God uses it for good. The curse becomes a blessing. Your tongue becomes an instrument of praise. It demonstrates peace, love, joy, patience, gentleness.

And who gets the GLORY? You know who gets the Glory. The only one to who Glory is due is Jesus...the one who always speaks peace; who always speaks joy; who always speaks a word of love. NO, we cannot control our tongues, but praise God we don't have to. GOD CAN CONTROL OUR TONGUES... LET'S LET HIM!

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GOD CAN control our tongues, beloved
The sparks need not destroy
God can take our tongues and make them
Into instruments of joy

God CAN control the things we say
We need not boastful be
God can instead release through us
His spirit of humility

God CAN control our lying
He can release instead,
The Living Truth from these, our tongues,
As by His Power we're led

God CAN control our gossip
That brings us such disgrace,
He can instead speak kindness,
Kind words take their place

God CAN control our tongues, my friend
HE wants to grant us power
That through Us, godliness might flow
Hour after Hour.

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