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# “ITS ONLY WORDS”

A BESIDE STILL WATERS  
SPECIAL ISSUE

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EVEN SO THE TONGUE IS A LITTLE  
MEMBER, AND BOASTETH GREAT  
THINGS. BEHOLD, HOW GREAT A  
MATTER A LITTLE FIRE KINDLETH!  
JAMES 3.5

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**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt  
among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as  
of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace  
and truth.  
John 1:14**

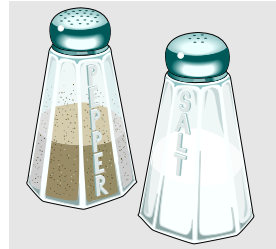


**SET A WATCH, O LORD,  
BEFORE MY MOUTH;  
KEEP THE DOOR OF MY LIPS.  
PSALMS 141.3**

# “ITS ONLY WORDS”

This is an aspect of Christian living that is often overlooked as unimportant. Remember the Christian life is a process of ongoing learning and change. Jesus teaches us through the Holy Spirit, from His Word; from counsel from older Christians; and through our life experiences; even at times by direct impressions. He will especially reveal trouble spots in our characters that are not pleasing to Him when we pray and ask Him to guide us in living as He would like us to live. He always promises the power to overcome will be given to us when we ask Him and tell Him we want the sin shown us to be out of our lives as well as ask Him for forgiveness for it when it is shown to us.

Jesus made it clear in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7, that our Christian life goes far beyond our actions and major events in our lives, but involve our words, yes, even our thoughts!



**SALT NOT  
PEPPER!**

**“LET YOUR  
SPEECH BE  
ALWAYS WITH  
GRACE,  
SEASONED  
WITH SALT,  
THAT YE MAY  
KNOW HOW YE  
OUGHT TO  
ANSWER EVERY  
MAN.”  
COLOSSIANS 4:6**

*“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”*

*Matthew 12:36, 37*

*“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle*

*the whole body.*

*“Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.*

*Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.*

*“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

*“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*

*“For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

*“Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” James 3:2-10*



**A WORD FITLY  
SPOKEN IS LIKE  
APPLES OF GOLD  
IN PICTURES OF  
SILVER.  
PROVERBS 25: 1 1**

Sometimes in our daily lives we can be in a habit of saying things that we don't really mean. We must consider whether this practice is appropriate for a Christian. Have you ever heard a mother say to a naughty child, "If you do that again I'll kill you!" or various other threats of injury or abandonment? When you think of it, what a terribly wicked thing to say, especially to a child; but we know she doesn't mean it. But *does* the child know? and if he does, then he is learning to ignore what his mother says and certainly he's learning to say it back, just like Mom or

**“A Time to keep silence, and a time to speak.”**  
**Ecclesiastes 3:7**

Dad! God designed children to copy the role modeling of their parents and He wants us to say what we do mean. To do otherwise is to tell a lie.

*“Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.” Proverbs 12:22*

*“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

*“Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” Matthew 5:33-37*

We can see by this again that Jesus directs us to plain, honest, and sincere speech. We know we should not take the name of the Lord in vain but many do not know that this includes the use of the commonly accepted short forms of God's name, such as “Golly, Gee, Gosh, Gee Wiz, Oh, my God, Jeepers”. The true Christian will seek by the grace of God to eliminate this slanguage from their speech as well.

*He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name. Psalms 111.9*

It is also important that we show respect unto the characteristics that God claims as His own therefore we do not call a man reverend or holy or father in the spiritual sense. We also do not use the word holy as a slang expression; i.e. holy smoke, holy cow, or worse.

*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5.8*

God pronounces His blessing on the pure in heart and a Christian will seek to eliminate from his life and speech that which is profane and vulgar. After all he wants the presence of the Holy Spirit and Angels with him and will avoid that which would be offensive to these heavenly beings.

*Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. Ephesians 5:4  
As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,  
So is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, Am not I in sport? Proverbs 26:18,19*

Although as Christians, we should be the happiest people on earth, yet there is a type of jesting and joking that is wholly out of place; sarcasm, mockery, and trying to say something witty, to gain advantage at the expense of others is not compatible with Christian love.

*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also 1 John 4.20, 21.*

*A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. Proverbs 15.1,2*

*In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. Proverbs 10.19*

*Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God*

*is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. Ecclesiastes 5.1-3*

You can see in this selection of texts that our choice of what we say, how we say it, and if we say it, is important to God and if we choose to allow Him to, He will help us refine and purify our speech habits according to His will. As it says in the quote from James, “He that bridleth the tongue can control the whole man.” As we seek Jesus’ power to be careful and righteous in how we speak, He will bless us and give us victory in this and many other things in our lives as well.

*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. Matthew 6.45*

*Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. Proverbs 17.28*

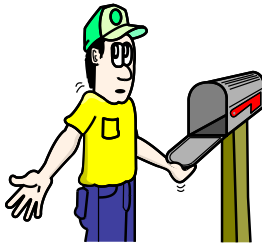
There’s a fable about a silly donkey that found a lion’s skin and put it on and had great sport frightening the village folk. But when he opened his mouth to roar, he only brayed and so was caught and beaten. Even a donkey can pass as a lion if he keeps his mouth shut!

Jesus can change us so that when we are angry with someone, we will not pour out a torrent of angry words but will hold our peace or give an answer of peace. Even when they crucified our Lord, He never ‘said a mumbling word!’ Remember, we can’t make these changes our own selves but Jesus can and will when we truly desire them and seek them. We must strive for these things as if it all depended on us and pray in faith as if it all depended on Jesus. When we truly want to be changed, He will perform the miracle in our lives!

“It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have—the great mercy and love of God,—we would have more faith and greater joy.” M.H.251-52

“Satan cannot read our thoughts, but he can see our actions, hear our

words; and from his long knowledge of the human family he can shape his temptations to take advantage of our weak points of character. And how often do we let him into the secrets of how he may obtain the victory over us. Oh, that we might control our words and actions! How strong we would become if our words were of such an order that we would not be ashamed of them in the day of judgment. How different will they appear in the day of God from what they seem when we utter them.” (Review and Herald, Feb. 27, 1913)



Sometimes we remain silent when great good could be accomplished by our communications. Consider this little verse:

“The tender words unspoken,  
The letters never sent,  
The long-forgotten messages,  
The wealth of love unspent.”

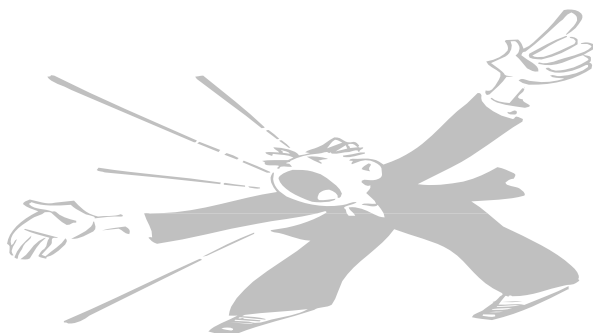
“For these some hearts are breaking,  
For these some loved ones wait;  
Show them that you care for them  
Before it is too late!” Unknown



THERE IS THAT SPEAKETH LIKE THE PIERCINGS  
OF A SWORD: BUT THE TONGUE OF THE WISE IS  
HEALTH.

THE LIP OF TRUTH SHALL BE ESTABLISHED FOR  
EVER: BUT A LYING TONGUE IS BUT FOR A  
MOMENT.

PROVERBS 12:18,19



**If your lips would keep from slips,  
Five things observe with care-  
Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,  
And how and when and where.**

**If your ears would save from jeers,  
These things keep meekly hid;  
Myself and I, and mine and my,  
And how I do and did.**