"Knowing When to Keep your Mouth Shut!"

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."

(Proverbs 21:23)

"A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;"

(Ecclesiastes 3:7)

"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."

(Ecclesiastes 5:2)

"Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?"

(Ecclesiastes 5:6)

One of the most difficult things in life is knowing when to keep your mouth shut. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. Destroyed marriages, divided churches, and devastating wars are the results of unbridled tongues. It is amazing that such a small member can produce such irreparable damage.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

(Proverbs 18:21)

"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. Doth a fountain send forth at the
same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my
brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no
fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man
and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a
good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

(James 3:3 - 13)

Much is said in the Bible concerning what to say and when to
say it. It ought to be the desire of every child of God to ask
the Lord for wisdom in knowing when to speak. A sermon such as
this is easy to preach but hard to practice. There are
certainly times when believers need to keep their mouths shut.

I. When the FLESH is ANGRY!

A. Angry Words are Foolish.

"He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked
devices is hated."

(Proverbs 14:17)

B. Angry Words are Final.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to
hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man
worketh not the righteousness of God."

(James 1:19 - 20)

C. Angry Words can be Fatal!

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your
wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole
steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his
hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him
that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your
mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it
may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy
Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

(Ephesians 4:26 - 32)

*God's people need to be careful not to offend weaker brothers and sisters in Christ. Every saved person has been a weaker brother at one time or another. Angry words can easily offend the weak. Mature Christians should encourage the discouraged and lift up the fallen.

"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

(I Corinthians 8:9 - 13)

II. When the FACTS are ABSENT!

A. Information may be Lacking!

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

(Proverbs 18:13)

*Many people have judged me for something that someone has told them that I did. I find it interesting that folks are not ashamed to run their mouths but are too ashamed to release the name of the person or persons that gave them the information. Most of the information is one-sided or a complete lie! It is always better to verify a story before believing or acting upon it.

*Lord, help us to know all that we can about a situation before we react.

B. Individuals may be Lied Upon!
"For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips."

(Proverbs 8:7)

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

(Ephesians 4:25)

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;"

(Colossians 3:9)

*Liars never please God! Those who continue in their lies and refuse to repent will suffer eternal consequences.

"and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

(Revelation 21:8)

C. Issues may be better Left Alone!

*God has not given His people a license to investigate the lives of other saints. Many situations would be better off left alone. If the issue does not pertain to us, we should determine to not get involved.

"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

(I Corinthians 4:3 - 5)

*Keep your Mouth Shut till JESUS Comes!!!

III. When a FRIENDSHIP could be ABOLISHED!

"An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends."

(Proverbs 16:27 - 28)
A. Real Friendships are Few!

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

(Proverbs 18:24)

B. Reputations are Fragile!

"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."

(Proverbs 11:13)

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

(Proverbs 18:8)

*Friendships are important in life. A real friend will love at all times. Faithful friends protect your reputation. However, the wrong words can ruin the best of friendships. When a solid friendship is at stake, it would be better to keep your mouth shut!

C. Restorations are Fundamental!

"BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

(Galatians 6:1)

*Many people who claim to be "fundamental" Bible believers have no desire to believe or practice Galatians 6:1. They do not possess an ounce of compassion in their hearts. They have no concept of what forgiveness and restoration really mean. The first time they recognize a fault in a man's life, they are forever finished with that man. Instead of restoration, these critics want condemnation.

***The Independent, Fundamental Pharisees' Revised Version of Galatians 6:1 is as follows:

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are judgmental, condemn such an one in the spirit of anger; forgetting thyself, since we could certainly never be tempted!"

III. When the FATHER would be

ASHAMED!
A. Vicious Words are Sacrilegious!

"Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour."

(Proverbs 14:9)

*When you are tempted to make light of holy things, it would be better to keep your mouth shut. Jokes about Heaven and Hell are not funny. Turning hymns into rock and rap songs is NOT funny. Sin is much too serious to make jokes about. We are accountable for what we say!

*Lord, help my words to be what they should be. Help me not to say anything to make you ashamed of me.

B. Vile Words are a Shame!

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it."

(I Peter 3:8 - 11)

*The words that we say reflect upon the Lord. We should strive to make our words a good reflection of Him. SLANG and SWEAR words are certainly not a good testimony for Jesus Christ!

C. Vindictive Words are Spiteful!

*When we are tempted to speak from a heart of vengeance and spite, it would be better to keep our mouth shut. The Scriptures command us to forgive those who wrong us. The Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest example on this subject.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearsers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

(Isaiah 53:7)

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he
suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: "

(I Peter 2:21 - 23)

*Conclusion*: Our message only covers a few of the situations in which it is best to keep silent. Certainly there are many other fine examples of this in life. There is a simple yet powerful principle that could help us all in this matter. If you cannot find something nice to say about someone, it is better to say nothing at all!

If, after examining our lives, we find that our words are consistently critical of others, it is time to take an inventory of just what kind of Christian we really are. It would be wise to keep our words sweet because we may end up eating them later. No one has ever regretted using kind and sweet words about and to someone. This world would be a better place if kinder and sweeter words filled the air.

May God give us wisdom in knowing when to speak and when to keep our mouths shut!

"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

(Psalm 141:3)

Amen and Amen!

**Evangelist Jeremiah Dixon**

**Knoxville, Tn**