

# Foolproofing Our Tongues

Lesson 01 of the series: "Foolproof"

Foolproof = fool (a thickheaded person) + proof (resistant) = to make safe against the incompetence of a fool

## A. If we foolishly don't control our tongues, we will get into all kinds of trouble.

"The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences."

Proverbs 18:21 (NLT)

"Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything."

Proverbs 13:3 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We need to do all we can to foolproof our tongues.

"If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless." James 1:26 (NLT)

## B. Six things we can do to help foolproof our tongues.

1. We can keep our mouths shut.

"Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut." Proverbs 10:19 (NLT)

"A truly wise person uses few words... Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent." Proverbs 17:27-28 (NLT)

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Proverbs 12:13 (KJV)

2. We can tell the truth.

"Truthful words stand the test of time, but lies are soon exposed." Proverbs 12:19 (NLT)

"The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth." Proverbs 12:22 (NLT)

"People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy." Proverbs 28:13 (NLT)

3. We can speak kindly.

"The wise are known for their understanding, and pleasant words are persuasive... From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are persuasive. Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body." Proverbs 16:21-24 (NLT)

"A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare." Proverbs 15:1 (NLT)

"The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Proverbs 12:18 (NIV)

"Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can break bones." Proverbs 25:15 (NLT)

4. We can refuse to pass on gossip.

"A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends." Proverbs 16:28 (NLT)

"A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence."

Proverbs 11:13 (NLT)

"The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts."

Proverbs 18:8 (NIV)

5. We can say "NO!" instead of overpromising/overcommitting/overextending.

"...if you have trapped yourself by your agreement and are caught by what you said—follow my advice and save yourself, for you have placed yourself at your friend's mercy. Now swallow your pride; go and beg to have your name erased. Don't put it off; do it now! Don't rest until you do. Save yourself like a gazelle escaping from a hunter, like a bird fleeing from a net." Proverbs 6:2-5 (NLT)

6. We can surrender control of our tongues to the Lord.

"The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words." Proverbs 15:28 (NLT)

“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.”

Luke 6:45 (NLT)

“Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

Proverbs 1:7 (NLT)

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### **Connect Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Share a time you really put your foot in your mouth. What did you learn from the experience?
2. Read Proverbs 13:3, 18:23 & James 3:2-10. How do you think these verses apply to our use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, texting, etc.) as well as the words we say verbally?
3. James 1:26 says, “If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.” Why is this true?
4. Read Proverbs 15:28 & Luke 6:45. How would you describe the relationship between our hearts and our tongues?
5. Spend some time as a group discussing the following statements of wisdom regarding our tongues:
  - We should speak truth. (Proverbs 12:22, 28:23)
  - We should speak kindly. (Proverbs 16:21-24, 15:1, 12:18)
  - We should be quick to listen & slow to speak. (Proverbs 11:13, 13:3, & James 1:19)
  - We should avoid gossip. (Proverbs 11:13, 16:28, 18:8)
  - We should say “NO!” to overcommitment/overpromising. (Proverbs 6:2-5)
6. Discuss the following Abraham Lincoln quotes:

“Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt.”

“Everybody likes a compliment.”

“No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.”

“I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.”