

What does it take to get your attention?

I just had a miserable reminder that there is more than one way to get things done.

I planned to eat healthier and drop a few pounds this winter. I never did get around to it – until this weekend. That's when I spent three days in the bathroom with the stomach flu. How much more pleasant it would have been to eat a little healthier instead of having my digestive system turned inside out.

God sometimes works this way. He loves us and wants to be part to our lives and, if He has to, He'll take drastic measures. If we ignore Him and put Him off, He **will** get our attention – even if He has to make us miserable. As you'll read below He had to grab my attention last night.

So, are you going to spend time with Him? My suggestion. . . give Him your attention before He has to grab it!!

Grateful my Creator loves me enough to get my attention,
Jennifer

Loose Lips Make Long Lines

Last night someone pointed out that my emotions were taking over my head and heart and, as a result, my mouth was being destructive. OUCH. *That* gave me a sleepless night - because they were right.

In Matthew 12:36 Jesus tells us we will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word we have spoken. Every time I come across this verse I cringe. Just hope you're not in the judgment line behind me, because you'll have a LONG wait while I do all my accounting.

I often have women who are quieter (which automatically means wiser in my book) tell me they wish they could be more vocal like me. Yet I look at them and wish I could just learn to shut up and be the one without a comment and idea all the time. Sometimes I wish I could sew my lips shut. I've even considered a fast where I give up all talking for a week. And it's not just the quantity of my words, it's the quality; it sometimes seems my mouth isn't even attached to my head or my heart and has a life of its own.

Do you ever feel this way?

We women have so many words running around our brains begging to get out that it sometimes feels like our head will explode! And, though our strong emotions allow us to connect deeply and empathize with others, they also contribute to the excess and sinfulness of our mouths.

Last night as I tossed and turned, I resolved to do something about this problem. I've prayed about it a lot the past few months, but I don't think I really wanted to change. Because, rather than waiting on the Lord to work things out and taking all the issues to Him, part of me enjoys getting all worked up and passionate for a 'cause,' even feeding on the drama.

It's time to change; to save my emotional, worked up words for spreading the good news about our Savior, Jesus Christ, and not the latest neighborhood news. It's a choice. A choice I can only make by the power of Christ, but still my choice to make.

Today I make that choice. I am walking away from gossip, from rumor spreading and from taking things to the phone before I take them to the throne. I will choose the words I use with my

children instead of letting them pour out unchecked. Sometimes I will choose to just keep my words in my own head.

I will not only ask the Lord to filter my words, but actually take time to listen to Him before I speak. I will stop getting into conversations that compromise and threaten my decision to speak Godly words. And, when I do find myself there, I will mentally turn and run as far and as fast I can in the other direction, throwing myself upon the love and mercy of Jesus.

What about you? Are there any decisions you need to make about your mouth?

I know I'm not the only one with this issue, because not only did God feel the need to give instruction on this in the Bible, He covers it more than once (or twice, or three times, or ten times)!

Remember that we are looking for a new life in this new year. Nothing is going to change if nothing changes. Let's do this together. Who knows, maybe we'll even get to stand close by in the judgment line and celebrate together as our life reaches 2008 and our word accounting goes from a tedious task to a speed session.

Pray for me in this. I'll pray for you. It won't be easy, but I look forward to giving you a high-five and celebrating a "well-done" on the other side.

Meditate and Study

Grab your notebook and Bible and get ready to explore! Before you start, ask God to open your eyes and heart to His truth.

Lesson 5-1

1. What did you learn or apply from the last lesson?

If you didn't do the lesson, you can print it at

<http://www.hopeinthelord.org/DownloadBibleStudy.html>

****This looks like a lot to look up, but they're close together and quick reads. They will give you help you see what the Lord desires. Don't skip over them. Take time to read them and write out an answer for each verse. You will be blessed by your time!*

2a. According to these verses, what sins come from the mouth?

Exodus 20:7

Exodus 20:16

Psalm 12:2

Psalm 31:18

Psalm 34:13

Proverbs 10:18

Proverbs 11:13

Proverbs 16:28

Proverbs 17:14

Proverbs 20:19

Proverbs 26:17

Proverbs 27:2

2b. Which of these have you done?

(continued)

3. From these verses, what should our mouths be used for?

Psalm 7:17

Psalm 8:2

Psalm 9:2

Psalm 30:12

Psalm 51:15

Psalm 59:16

Psalm 63:3

Psalm 66:1

Psalm 66:19

Psalm 88:13

Psalm 143:1

Proverbs 8:6-7

Proverbs 10:21

Proverbs 15:7

Proverbs 22:17-18

3a) How often is your mouth used in these ways?

4. What additional thoughts do these verses give you?

Deuteronomy 23:21-23

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 13:3

Ecclesiastes 10:12-14

Matthew 15:8

James 1:19

5a. Write a prayer asking the Lord Jesus to help you see your words through His eyes and reveal the truth of your words.

5b. What new thoughts came to you during your prayer?

6a. How do you need to change the way you use your mouth?

6b. How can you use your mouth to praise the Lord each day and in all ways?

7a. What will you specifically avoid this week to keep from sinning with your mouth?

7b. What will specific thing will you do this week to use your mouth in a good way?

8. Close with a prayer to the Lord, praising and thanking Him for loving us even though we are sinners in need a mouth overhaul. What a blessing it is that we don't have to battle with the impossible job of saving ourselves but instead have a Savior who accomplished that job for all of us who love Him. Praise You, Lord Jesus Christ!!!

Lesson 5-2

Pray for the Lord to reveal His truth to you and open your heart.

1. What did you learn from the last lesson?

2. Review your answers to questions 7a and 7b from the last lesson. How did you do?

Read Matthew 12:33-35, Matthew 7:15-20 and Luke 6:43-45, which record Jesus' spoken words.

3. In your own words, what is the common message Jesus gives?

4. According to these passages, why are our words so important?

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- 5a. Take a moment to think back on words you've said to certain key people or in certain key situations throughout your life. What do they reveal to you about your true heart?
- 5b. Now focus on the words you have used in casual conversations the past weeks. What do they reveal about your heart?
- 5c. Are you surprised at what this reveals?

Read Matthew 12:36-37.

- 6a. What does this teach us about the long-term consequences of our words?
- 6b. What consequences have you already suffered because of your careless words?
- 6c. What consequences have others suffered because of your careless words?

Read 1 John 1:5-10.

- 7a. Reviewing the first lesson, do you believe the careless words you have spoken were sinful?
- 7b. From verse 9, what should you do to seek forgiveness?
- 7c. From Luke 6:37-38, what should you do when the words of others harm you?

Read Ezekiel 19:31, 36:26-27 and Ephesians 4:22-24

- 8a. What does this tell you about getting a new heart attitude?
- 8b. Where do you need to put off your old self and be made new in the attitude of your mind?
- 8c. What specific things will you do this week to change your heart? Your words?

9. Close with a prayer asking the Lord Jesus to help you clothe yourself in Him (Romans 13:14) and take your thoughts captive, making them obedient to Him (2 Corinthians 10:5) so that your words may show a true and pure overflow of your heart.

Thank you, Lord Jesus for your truth that tells us our words show our true heart. Thank you for being the way our hearts and words may be made pure. Lord, strengthen us that we may keep your decrees, not just to do right, but because all of our heart yearns to please you. You are mighty and good, Lord. We love you and we praise you!! We pray all these things in the perfect name of Jesus Christ. Amen

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Let's do this!!!

In awe of our God who is SO good,
Jennifer