

Self-control is choosing to do what you should even when you don't want to.

DAY 1

Read Proverbs 18:21

Words have power. But maybe you've never thought about words having the power of life and death! That sounds a little harsh, right?

The truth is, words can kill relationships. Because once you say something hurtful or unkind, you can't take it back. The damage is done. Hurtful words can wreck relationships and cause damage that you might not be able to repair. And sometimes, more words mean more trouble. That's why controlling your words, thinking before you speak, is so important.

This week, when you find yourself angry or mad or ready to yell, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is this kind?
2. Is this helpful?
3. If I say this thing I really want to say, will it make the situation better or worse?

If the answer to any of those questions is no, it's probably a good idea to keep your mouth closed. Let's stop and think before we speak this week so we can protect our relationships. Pray and ask God to help you control your tongue this week.

DAY 2

Read Proverbs 12:18

Have you ever gotten an itty bitty teeny tiny paper cut that hurt so bad you wanted to cut off your whole finger?

Words are kind of like paper cuts. Just a few thoughtless words, spoken without thinking first can cause a lot of harm. According to our verse, the words from careless people can cut like swords. But the opposite is also true. Carefully chosen words can actually heal. They can help.

Sword vs. Bandage

1. Grab an index card or small scrap of paper.
2. Draw a sword on one side and a band-aid on the other.
3. On the sword side, write the first part of the verse ("The words of thoughtless people cut like swords.")
4. On the band-aid side, write the second part of the verse ("But the tongue of wise people brings healing.")
5. Set this card on the kitchen table. Show your family the card and read the verse. Talk about how thinking before you speak can help you make sure your words are thoughtful and healing instead of thoughtless and hurtful.

DAY 3

Read Psalm 141:3

Have you ever seen a picture of the guards that stand outside Buckingham Palace in England? The members of the Queen’s Guard wear very tall hats made of fur to make them appear taller and more intimidating. Ask an adult to look up a picture of a guard so you can see for yourself!

These guards stand very still, eyes forward, watching constantly to make sure the door they’re guarding is secure. These trained military men serve two-hour shifts, standing perfectly still (no smiling allowed) the entire time. Talk about a tough job.

What if you chose to guard your lips (the words you say) as carefully as a member of the Queen’s Guard protects the palace? What if you were very careful not to let any harmful or hurtful word escape from your mouth?

Keeping Watch

1. Write the words from today’s verse on a piece of tape.
2. Tape it to the door frame above the door of your room.
3. Tap it each time you leave and ask God to help you keep watch over the door of your lips!

DAY 4

Read Proverbs 15:1

Have you ever held a brand-new baby? What is one thing you have to remember?

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Yes, be gentle! You have to protect them, support their little heads, and make sure you hold them snugly without squishing them too much!

When you are gentle or careful with your words, you can stop a fight before it starts. Instead of stirring things up and making it worse, you could actually fix it. But gentleness requires time and care.

Mothers have been singing “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” as a lullaby to their sleeping babies for generations. Sing the following words as a reminder to be gentle and think before you speak.

We must think before we speak
(Twinkle twinkle little star)
Every day of every week.
(How I wonder what you are)
Keep in mind when words are said
(Up above the world so high)
They can’t be taken back again
(Like a diamond in the sky)
So be careful what you say
(Twinkle twinkle little star)
Being gentle is the way.
(How I wonder what you are.)

Think before you speak.