

## Mouth Guards

*The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.*  
Proverbs 10:11

It didn't happen often. I only remember hearing it on a couple of occasions. But I guarantee you that in those rare moments when my father let loose with a foul word, it made a deep impression on me. It shocked and surprised me.

He was a man of few words. And even fewer foul words or disrespectful words. I doubt that I heard him use 10 curse words my entire life. And over the 46 years of his marriage, I never recall hearing him speak harshly to my mother even once.

I guarantee you, your children are watching. And listening.

If you hope to control the wild tongues in your family, you must first clean up the words that flow from your own. The way you speak to each other, and to your children, must set the course. If you speak respectfully to one another, you can reasonably expect your children to do the same.

What kind of boundaries have you chosen to set on your speech? Cursing is clearly wrong, of course, but what about slang words that are right on the edge of foul language? What about other toxins of the tongue, like gossiping and criticizing people behind their backs?

Do your children hear you using unwholesome speech to describe your neighbors or coworkers? What comments do they hear you making about your boss, your pastor or your political leaders? What do you say when somebody cuts you off in traffic or dumps trash in your yard? Do you obey God's commandment to honor your parents, or do you grumble about the burden they've become?

Never forget that mutual respect is the foundation of all healthy relationships. The way we relate to each other as a couple is the best model for helping children learn the pleasing use of the tongue.

## Discuss

How would your children describe the model you are setting in your home of your vocabulary and how you speak to one another?

## Pray

Pray that the meditation of your heart and the words of your mouth will be acceptable in the sight of God.

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