

August 28, 2010



**Key Text:** Choose one of the texts from Wednesday's portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.

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**Sunday**  
**HERE'S WHAT I THINK**

- >> David and Rachel had a big fight at lunch in the cafeteria right at your table. There were not many people around because lunch had just started. You, however, were there, and you heard and saw everything. It was the biggest shock because everyone thought they would be together forever. Throughout the day both seem to be near tears, but they are not talking—to each other or anyone else. You are the only one who really knows what happened, so everyone rushes to you to find out the truth.
- >> How do you decide what information, if any, to share? Whom would you share it with? What effect will your actions have on the situation?
- >> Log on to [www.guidemagazine.org/rtf](http://www.guidemagazine.org/rtf) to post your responses. Be up-front and honest. Say what you think.

**STICKS AND STONES AND . . . WORDS?**

*(This is an illustration. It is only an illustration. What connection do you think it has with the Bible texts on the other page?)*

Screams erupted from the courtroom. There was a row of young girls who sat on the front row, and every so often their voices would hit high pitches and their bodies would twist and shake. These outbursts were not limited to the courtroom. When the young women were at home and even at church, sometimes they would go into a fit, although they never dared to have an outburst during prayer or the sermon—just during the down times of the service.

Doctors could find no reasonable explanation for their condition, so they concluded it must be witchcraft. Somebody in the village was bewitching these girls. The townspeople believed only the girls knew who was doing this to them. As a result, those girls became celebrities. They instantly became the town's most talked-about, honored, and feared citizens. At their word you could go to jail and even be hanged.

The first few people the girls accused were likely suspects, a slave from the Caribbean, a homeless woman, and a woman they heard their parents say entertained men late at night. The slave confessed to witchcraft, so they let her go. In Salem they believed that if you admitted to witchcraft, the devil no longer had power over you. The other two women, however, maintained their innocence, so they were hanged.

In this town, life was usually rather boring, but with all these witch trials going on, things picked up a little. The girls loved the attention, so they had more fits, and more people went to jail. At first the girls accused only the people their parents did not like or of whom they had heard rumors. Soon, in order to appear innocent themselves, others began accusing people of witchcraft. Witch fever had taken control of Salem.

Though they had trials, if the girls said someone was guilty the victim was hanged. The girls were caught in lies many times, but the town was run on gossip. Lies were much more interesting and binding than the truth.

Before the governor shut down the witch trials and the girls actually confessed to their lies, 150 people were in prison, 200 more stood accused, 20 had been executed, and five died in prison. People lost their property and their jobs. Husbands lost their wives, and wives lost their husbands. There were also many orphans in Salem village because children had lost both parents to execution.

Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can get someone killed. The people of the Salem village in Massachusetts learned this lesson all too well.

**Monday**  
**WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?**

**Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His Word? After reviewing the texts in the God Says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.**

- >> "If you haven't got anything nice to say about anybody, come sit next to me."—Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt.
- >> "The biggest liar in the world is They Say."—Douglas Malloch, 20th-century poet.
- >> "The whole point of gossip is to talk behind the person's back, not in front of him. I didn't realize you were unclear on this concept."—Roz, from the TV series Frasier.
- >> "If I think it would hurt a peripheral person, wife, child, girlfriend . . . I won't go with it."—Melissa Rivers, current U.S. media personality.
- >> "Some say our national pastime is baseball. Not me. It's gossip."—Erma Bombeck, 20th-century U.S. humorist, newspaper columnist.
- >> "Trying to squash a rumor is like trying to unring a bell."—Shana Alexander, 20th-century U.S. journalist and author.
- >> "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it hardly becomes any of us to talk about the rest of us."—Edward Wallis Hoch, 20th-century U.S. politician.

Write your own quotation.  
**What I say is . . .**

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Tuesday  
**SO WHAT?**

- >> Have you ever stepped on an open tube of toothpaste and had its contents squirt all over the floor? If you have, you know you have a sticky mess on your hands. This is a lot like squirting gossip all over the place. Just as you can't get the toothpaste back in the tube, you can't take words back. Many times the damage is irreversible.
- >> Whether we own up to it or not, our words have power. Unfortunately, many times we use this power for bad. We have all been hurt by things people have said about us. We also know that it doesn't have to be a lie to be hurtful. In many cases, sharing the truth in the wrong situation can hurt just as much or more.
- >> James talks about the daunting task of controlling our tongues. It takes both strength and courage. It takes strength to keep our mouth shut and courage to tell others to shut their mouths when they come bearing juicy gossip. Just think about it. If a classmate wanted to talk about someone, and you suggested you all not talk about that person behind her back, you are setting yourself apart as someone of integrity who can be trusted.
- >> This, however, is not a task you can handle by yourself. You are going to have to get help, supernatural help from God. You are going to have to ask Him continually to guard your tongue and keep your mouth full of grace.



Thursday  
**WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?**

- >> Why all this talk on gossip and words? Because some people are well into adulthood before they realize or understand the power that is caged behind their teeth. During this time of exploration and discovery of who you really are, you will find it will be a whole lot easier if you do not get caught up in locker room or lunch table talk that will hurt others and also backfire and hurt you, too.
- >> Every school, church, and town has a person who is a big mouth. People do not feel comfortable around them, because they do not want to be the next "talk of the town." As agents in God's kingdom, we should be people others feel comfortable and at ease around. If they are in need of help, advice, or encouragement, they should know they can get a Christian perspective from us and not have to worry about everyone else knowing their troubles. Trust, grace, and love in these matters can be a great tool to recruit others to the kingdom!



Wednesday  
**GOD SAYS . . .**

- >> **Psalm 141:3 (NKJV)**  
"Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."
- >> **Proverbs 26:22 (Message)**  
"Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you want junk like that in your belly?"
- >> **Exodus 23:1 (NKJV)**  
"You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."
- >> **Proverbs 20:19 (NCV)**  
"Gossips can't keep secrets, so avoid people who talk too much."
- >> **Proverbs 16:28 (TLB)**  
"An evil man sows strife; gossip separates the best of friends."
- >> **Psalm 34:12, 13 (NLT)**  
"Do any of you want to live a life that is long and good? Then watch your tongue! Keep your lips from telling lies!"
- >> **Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)**  
"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."
- >> **Ephesians 5:4 (Message)**  
"Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, Christians have better uses for language than that. Don't talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn't fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect."
- >> **James 4:11 (Message)**  
"Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, his Message, his Royal Rule, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. You're supposed to be honoring the Message, not writing graffiti all over it."
- >> (More: Proverbs 26:18, 19.)



Friday  
**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

- >> Think of a time someone said something to or about you that was really a downer—something that made you feel bad. Now, think of a time when someone said an upper to or about you—something that made you feel good. Write about these situations below, exploring (1) whether they were true or not, (2) how they made you feel, (3) how long they have stuck in your memory, and/or (4) any repercussions they may have had.

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>> After you have explored your memory, commit your thoughts and words to God by finding and repeating aloud **Psalm 141:3** and then **Psalm 19:14**.

