

# The Danger of Talking Too Much

by J.R. Miller

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*The sermon warns against the dangers of talking too much, including unkind, idle, and rash words, and encourages listeners to be mindful of their speech.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 10:19, Matthew 12:36, James 1:19

**Topics:** "The Power of Words", "Self-Control in Speech"

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## Description

J.R. Miller warns against the dangers of excessive and careless speech, emphasizing that many words spoken can cause harm, especially unkind, idle, or rash words. He highlights the importance of speaking with intention and love, as well as the tendency of individuals to focus on themselves rather than uplifting others. Miller encourages self-restraint in conversation, suggesting that silence is often more valuable than empty chatter. He reminds us that our words should inspire and comfort rather than criticize or complain, and that true wisdom lies in speaking less and listening more.

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## Transcript

Many people talk too much. There are scarcely any of us by whom are spoken no words which it were better to have left unspoken. All unkind words belong to this class. We talk too much when we speak angrily, when we say a word that hurts another. Some people seem nearly always to be talking this way. They rarely ever say a generous word of anyone or to anyone, or a word which gives comfort or help. Their speech is full of uncharitable criticism or fretful complaining. If they spoke only when they had really good words to say -- they would be silent much of the time. We talk too much whenever we say anything unkind, or anything that needlessly gives pain to a gentle heart.

Another kind of speech that would better not be indulged in, is that condemned by our Lord when he said that we must give account for every idle word. It need not be a hurtful word -- if it is only idle, it is unfit to fall from a Christian's lips. Idle words are those that are empty, empty of love and of good, words of no value. There are many such words spoken. They may appear harmless; and yet they are useless, and uselessness always disappoints the Master. They give no comfort, they put no cheer into any heart, they inspire nothing beautiful in any soul. Too much of the conversation of the parlor, of the wayside, of the table, is of this vapid and empty order -- talk about merest nothings, inane, without thought, without sense, without beauty, without meaning. How it must astonish the angels to hear immortal beings using their marvelous gift of speech in such a trivial, idle way! We talk too much, when we use idle words.

We talk too much when we speak rash words. It was a wise counsel which the town clerk of Ephesus gave to the people, when he said to them: "You ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash." No lesson needs to be urged more repeatedly than this. Inconceivable harm comes from rash talking. Many people are rash in giving their opinions on subjects concerning which they really have no knowledge, of which they have never seriously thought. Many are rash in blaming and condemning others, without taking time to inquire into the circumstances, or to hear explanations. Others are rash in giving way to temper and saying words that are not only unfitting -- but are also cruel and unjust. In some families, the home life is greatly marred by rash words spoken in the common fellowship of the home. Sometimes it is a habit of contradicting and disputing, which has been allowed to grow until it has become inveterate. Usually the questions wrangled over are of no importance.

The other day there was a serious dispute over the question whether it was two o'clock or a quarter past two when a certain thing occurred, and the contention caused bitter anger and sharp words. There are families in which gentle and kindly speech, is the exception -- the staple talk is ill-tempered, dictatorial, or unloving. Outside, people dare not speak petulantly or angrily, for their neighbors would resent such language. But in the inner circle of love they remove the restraint, and their words too often cut deep into tender hearts. Though love forgives hasty speech, the wounds remain and bleed. We talk too much, when we speak hastily and rashly.

We talk too much, too, when we talk about ourselves. The wisest men scarcely ever speak of themselves. Certainly those who are most highly honored in any community, do not. The man who habitually talks about himself and his affairs and his doings -- declares himself a self-conceited egotist, and this practically neutralizes his influence. The better judgment of good people everywhere, approves the man who, if great, is not aware of his own greatness; if a saint, is unconscious of his own saintliness. One of the finest things in the story of Moses, is that when he came down from the mountain bathed in heavenly radiance, he "knew not that his face shone." If he had been aware of the brightness of his features -- the moral glory would have been dimmed. But too many seem to be aware that their faces shine, even though the radiance be not very bright.

It may be set down as a rule, without exception, that the man who talks about himself, is talking too much. But who will tell people about our attainments and achievements, if we do not? We need not trouble ourselves about that. It is not necessary that people should know how great we are, or what good things we do. There is nothing either lovely or Christlike, in the desire that the world should know of the fine things we do. On the other hand, our Lord said some very plain things about those who blow trumpets, when they do anything good or fine, to call the world's attention to themselves. Suppose we do our work well; it is no more than it is our duty to do. And are we the only people who have done and are doing their work well?

Talking about one's self is perilous, because when we begin it, we are sure to go on from bad to worse. There is a strange fascination about it. It intoxicates us and lures us on. We had better not begin. It may rob us of the pleasure of saying some things we would like to say -- but it is better we should endure the pain of such self-denial and self-restraint, rather than incur the danger into which beginning to talk about ourselves would lead us.

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