I don’t want anyone to panic, in this box I have a weapon, a very powerful weapon, in fact it is the most powerful weapon, the Bible even talks about this weapon and how much power it holds. This weapon literally can bring death in an instant to someone - this weapon is the TONGUE.

My title today is HOLD YOUR TONGUE.

As we continue this series, Overcomer, today, I am going to be talking about this mouth of ours that probably all of us in here have a problem overcoming. It’s something that we use every single day, that we so many times let overtake us, a lot of time we use it in the wrong way in fact it is the most powerful thing that we have been given so powerful it can either bring life or death.

James 3:3-12 (MSG)

3-5A bit in the mouth of a horse controls the whole horse. A small rudder on a huge ship in the hands of a skilled captain sets a course in the face of the strongest winds. A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it!

5-6It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.

7-10This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can’t tame a tongue—it’s never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth!

10-12My friends, this can’t go on. A spring doesn’t gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don’t bear strawberries, do they? Raspberry bushes don’t bear apples, do they? You’re not going to dip into a polluted mud hole and get a cup of clear, cool water, are you?

I hope that you hear what James is saying to us. I hope you can hear how powerful our tongues are.

Now I don’t really know much about guns, or all the most powerful weapons that we have in this world that can bring sudden death to people, but I want you to stick out your tongue - that is your most powerful weapon!
You see our words can either build up or tear down, they can create or destroy, they can save or condemn. I don’t think that we ever fully understand how powerful our words really are.

Think about it, God created all of earth, the universe, everything that exists with words, He said let there be light and there was light. Jesus healed and cast out demons, calmed storms, with His words.

We use words to worship God to pray to Him to have relationship with Him, to minister to others about Him. In order for me to minister to you I use words, but at the same time with the same tongue that speaks life and encouragement we can also use to talk about, speak harshly, gossip, complain, curse or to hurt someone else.

Like James said, can fresh water come from a muddy hole? Absolutely not! This is how ridiculous it is in the sight of God when we come in here and worship Him, then leave and talk about how much we didn’t like the songs the worship team sang, or how the minister preached, or we go on with our week and only gossip about other people, lie about issues that are going on, and so forth.

How crazy is it that all of those things come from the same tongue?

*Proverbs 18:21* (NKJV) says, *Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit of it.*

You hold the power to bring life or death not only to others but to yourself.

Even though this is the case we let this tiny muscle control the course of our life and the life of others.

I heard once that it is scientifically proven that words never truly go away, they stay in the atmosphere forever. What words have you left in the atmosphere? What words are you leaving in this house, at your job or in your own home, this of you that have children don’t you know that the words you speak in your home affect your children, whether they are 3 months old or 18 years old, they hold on to them and they even echo them. We know this to be true because so many of us hold on to the words of others even if we don’t want to.

As a girl, we spend quite a bit of time getting ready in the morning, making sure our hair our makeup and our outfits look amazing. In one day 10 people can tell me that I look amazing, then one it only takes one person to come up to me and tell me that they don’t like how I did my hair that day and which one do I listen to and let have a deeper affect on me? The one negative one, that can change my mood for the rest of the day, and affect what I do in the future.
That is just a surface example of how words affect us, I’m sure that there are some of you that have been verbally abused, maybe bullied, or talked about, and those words may still be having an affect on your life.

There was a science project done where they had two plants, with one plant they only spoke positive over and the other they spoke negatively. The plan that was spoken positively over bloomed and thrived and the other that was talked over negatively withered and never bloomed to its fullest potential.

Church, I want you to understand that words aren’t just words, they hold depth, and they hold power.

You can either hold your tongue or let your tongue hold you.

_Ephesians 4:29 (NIV) says “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what I helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen._

Church, we have to build each other up all of the time. I don’t want us to have any animosity or discord. If we want to move closer to God one of the key things we need to do is learn to talk positive, to encourage one another, and not just to each other’s faces but also behind each other’s backs, and not just to each other but to ourself.

I spoke on this topic some in our Girls Bible Study recently, and I talked about how our tongue can bring life and death not just to others but to ourself. Some of us may not have an issue hurting others with our tongue, however, we put ourselves down constantly, we only speak negative about our life, about our looks, guess what that is affecting your life whether you realize it right now or not.

I can’t say it enough that there is power in our words.

Like most of you know we are in this series called Overcomer, and you may have thought that at the beginning when I started out that this isn’t something that should necessarily be in a category of needing to overcome, but I hope that a picture was painted for you today to understand that we all fall short in this area, and we all need to overcome this, we must overcome this.

We can’t do it on our own, we need the help of our Father.

_Illustration: Story of my sisters and I in the car._

You see even though I thought in my little 9 year old thinking, I thought I could stop a moving car on my own, but I clearly couldn’t I needed the help of that curb. Like our tongue even though it’s small we cannot tame it on our own, we have to have God’s
help to stop it from causing any damage. We can get that help by spending time with Him, praying to Him and holding on to scriptures.

As we close today I’m going to give you some scriptures to help you that I gave to our ELEV8 girls last month.

When you want to argue remember—Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)—“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

When you want to gossip—Proverbs 10:18 (NIV)—Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spread slander is a fool.

When you want to lie—Psalms 34:13 (NIV)—Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies

A Prayer to pray to help you—out of Psalm 141:3 (NIV), “Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.”

Church, it’s time that we hold our tongue. Your words have more affect than you realize.