

Extreme Makeover – Spiritual Edition  
**Loose or Luscious Lips ... You Decide!**

Waterview Church of Christ's Ladies' Retreat  
February 25-26, 2005

When Karen approached me about speaking for today's topic of "Loose or Luscious Lips," I just smiled because, those of you who know me, know I love to talk! (Not necessarily to this large of crowd!) But I think most of us know that like our lips, talking can be both good and bad... Good when used during the *appropriate time*, in a proper *amount or length of time*, and in a *pleasant volume and velocity*. Bad, when those social criteria are not met (as my husband reminds me of, all too often). ;)

We all can think of awkward or uncomfortable experiences when we wished we had so-and-so with us who is really good at talking with new people (or perhaps just those excruciatingly quiet people). Or maybe some of us have wished that we would more often be one of those "quieter people" at times... But whatever the instance is, we can all think of certain people who are either really talented at carry on conversations or those who it just doesn't come very naturally. While it always seems so obvious to us how other people are... it is much more difficult to truly assess ourselves. Just as it is easier to pick out other people's personality weaknesses, it is also easier to pick out our own physical flaws and favorites for that matter. And that is what we are here for this weekend...A "Makeover," where we pamper our positive features and restore the things that are out of character for us Christian woman.

Well, whether you are one of the "skillful speakers" or you exemplify a "lacking conversationalist," there is both good news and bad news for us all! The bad news is we are in fact, women. And whether you agree with this or not, the world we live in, stereotypes us, to be the ones who seem to have the most trouble, or should I say cause the most trouble with our the way we use our lips. (Even though we all could of course make a much longer list of the downfalls of men – This one for us ladies seems to be our big one.) However, the good news is that we as Christians have the perfect word of God to guide us – and a spiritual family, who while not so perfect, is in deed

here to help strengthen, encourage and forgive us while we struggle to always glorify God with our lips.

While preparing for this study today, I came across a couple of cute little stories. The first one illustrating how no matter how old we get, how long we've been friends or how hard we try to always do what's right, we don't always make the best decisions when it comes to our mouths.

#### When and When Not to Speak:

Pearl and Lena went to the Minnesota State Fair every year, and every year Pearl would say, "Lena, I'd like to ride in that helicopter." Lena always replied, "I know Pearl, but that helicopter ride is 50 dollars and 50 dollars is 50 dollars."

One year, Lena and Pearl went to the fair and Pearl said, "Lena, I'm 85 years old and if I don't ride in that helicopter now, I might never get the chance. Lena replied, "Pearl, that helicopter ride is 50 dollars, and 50 dollars is 50 dollars."

The pilot overheard the two friends talking, and said, "Ladies, I'll make you a deal. I'll take both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire time and not say a word, I won't charge you. But if either of you says one word, it's 50 dollars."

Pearl and Lena agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word.

When they landed, the pilot turned to Pearl and said, "My goodness, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed."

Pearl replied, "Well, I was going to say something when Lena fell out, but 50 dollars is 50 dollars."

This next quick story highlights the opposite years of our life, really hit home for me as a junior high teacher. And no matter what your profession is or even whether you have children, this little story I think you all will find amusing and identifiable, as we all were once young girls growing into mature, make-up-wearing women:

### Lipstick At School

According to a news report, a certain private school in Washington recently was faced with a unique problem. A number of 12-year-old girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the bathroom everyday at school.

That was fine, but after they put on their lipstick they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints.

Every night, the maintenance man would remove them and the next day, the girls would put them back. Finally the principal decided that something had to be done. She called all the girls to the bathroom and met them there with the maintenance man. She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the custodian who had to clean the mirrors every night.

To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, she asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required. He then proceeded to take out a long-handled squeegee, dip it into the toilet, and clean the mirrors with it. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirrors.

Apparently, we use our lips for many things... we use them to kiss and smile, talk and sing, eat and drink, to frown or to bite when we are nervous, scared or just plain unamused... Our lips are tools of communication and function, yet are also a source of pleasure or pain. I often wonder why God gave such a small physical part of our bodies, such a large role with such great responsibility.

As an art teacher, I am always discussing the elements of design with my students. Design – or the planning or purpose for something is very important in many (if not all) aspects of life. I think about how creative God is in the way he makes us. How incomprehensibly complicated he made our bodies, yet how perfectly he designed all the countless systems and parts to work together successfully. I especially think its interesting how God gives us the sensations of emotion and physical sensitivity that he does in certain places. Our lips being a perfect example. Now, you take these two little (or big, whichever your case may be) strips of skin tissue that outline this whole in our face that is suppose to either keep things in or let things out....(yes, sometimes they do

malfunction!) Through our mouths, we control (or are suppose to control) what goes into our temple of a body, but also what comes out of our being through words of either intelligent affirmation or thoughtless tastelessness. And all too often, we allow Satan to use our lips as his weapons of destruction instead of being one of God's most valued tools of construction in building others up.

Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible warns us against **gossip, lies, angry words, sarcasm and foolishness** many times. Colossians 3:8 says, "But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: **anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language** from your **lips**." We are instructed in Ephesians 4: 31-32 to, "Let all **bitterness**, and **wrath** and **anger** and **clamor** and **slander** be put away from you, along with all **malice**. Be **kind** to one another, **tender hearted, forgiving** each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." As "good" Christian women who even though we know the grace of God's forgiveness, we are not exempt from this virtue-less acts whether it be by temptation or actual manifestation.

I think sometimes we as "good" women don't really think of ourselves as having loose lips that struggle with such "un-Christ-like" attributes such as **gossip, lying or extraverted anger**. However, we hopefully are all here this weekend to take that deeper look into ourselves to exfoliate and nurture those areas of ourselves that need cleansing... even if we don't know it, or admit it.

So, to be specific, what are some ways that we allow Satan to loosen our lips for his destructive purposes? Sadly, we sometimes use a service-oriented attitude as an excuse to talk about things that simply are not our's to talk about. The Bible defines a gossip as a tale-bearer, slander, and busybody, who talks to others about the intimate details of people's lives for injurious purposes, or states things about people that are false with the intent to harm them, or meddling into the affairs of others when we have no legitimate reason to be involved.

As Christian women, we must ask ourselves and truthfully answer some realistic scenario questions in regards to what the Word of God tells us to do.

When situations occur like:

\*A vague statement/announcement regarding a sensitive or surprising issue is made from the pulpit, are we ones who look around to see who might know more and can fill us in?

\*Do we give dishonest compliments to others when we think or say the exact opposite - of course only "privately" to someone else (like our husbands or children)?

\*When something "big" happens, such as a divorce, family-conflict, or someone is laid-off, do we go ahead and make sure it is ok with the person or parties to talk about it with others?

\*Do we constantly talk all about ourselves instead of asking others questions about their life to let them know that we care and want them to feel comfortable coming to church and to truly know we are here to lift each other up?

\*Or are we ones who find ourselves in a heartfelt talk with a close friend where it would be so easy and almost seem even appropriate to let things flow from our lips a little more freely than they normally would? Although we are not malicious or deceitful in spreading juicy gossip around, it's at times like these when we might feel like sharing all or even part of something we know about someone else or a certain situation, that I stop and ask myself, would I say this if the person was here with me? Is it really mine to tell?

I believe we have to be careful and really weigh out the difference between truly helping someone (or a "situation"), by telling someone else what's going on or keeping it to our self and simply going to God in private prayer for guidance or resolution. I try to keep a tight rule of thumb concerning this issue, because especially the sensitive spirits of women can be severely offended, wounded, scared or at worst, broken when our words are not kept controlled.

Scripture tells us in Matthew 12:36-37, "...every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be

justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” And if that’s not clear enough for us, Ephesians 5:6 plainly states “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

In Proverbs 6 there is a list of seven things that are an abomination to the Lord - all seven condemn the person with loose lips “A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren.” However, later on in Proverbs 31:25-26, we are told how a Virtuous woman is to use her lips, as she, “...smiles at the future. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.” There are many more examples from the Bible on God’s instructions to, view of, and plan for both the Luscious and Loose Lips of his people. We can not use ignorance or misunderstanding as an excuse to not follow to-a-tea what God expects of us and how He provides help for us so that we can be as beautiful as He made us to be.

So what does the world of aesthetic beauty tell us about taking care of our soft yet easily chapped lips? Here are three beauty tips for luscious lips: Moisturize, beautify and re-apply as needed.

The physical solution to chapped or dried-out lips is moisturizer. The world can be a cold place with harsh winds beating at the threshold of our face, tearing apart the doors of our mouth that we call lips. When the day is done, and we are (usually past) ready to allow our minds to sleep, we prepare our bodies for rest and preservation as well. As we moisturize our face, arms, hands, legs, feet or whatever, we must not forget about those little ever-so-sensitive strips skin called our lips, that without caretaking, can become hard, cracked, bloody and very ugly and painful.

We can beautify our lips by picking the right shade of color to wear. Just as a lady tries many different shades of lip color, to finally pick the one that goes best with her overall look and personality, try out and choose what best accentuates your spiritual lips,

whether it be teaching, singing, encouraging, or even feeding other people's mouths with your food.

And lastly, once you've found what you look best in/or are best at, go back periodically to see if you are still wearing not only the right color, but enough of it... and reapply as needed.

If you follow these three simple steps, and take with you, read and put to memory what God says about lips, you will maintain a fresh and renewed you with lasting luscious lips pleasing to yourself, those around you, and most importantly, to God!

As we close right now, let's go to our Father in prayer:

\*Holy Father, we come before you humbly, in awe of your greatness and amazing power to love us perfectly and endlessly.

\*Father, we know that we all too often allow Satan to loosen our lips for his purposes and not your's. We pray that you forgive us of those sins, for we know that sin is what separates us from you and we so want to be near you.

\*Lord, we thank you for Jesus and the sacrifice he made so that we can come to you pray all of these things. We thank you for your unconditional love and abounding grace – that is our salvation. We also thank you for the earthly blessings you give us. Thank you for the church and the congregation that meets at Waterview.

\*God, we ask that you go with us now and give us the wisdom, courage and self-control to turn our lips into luscious, beautiful lips pleasing to you. May we always seek your kingdom above all else.

It's In your precious son's name, Jesus, we pray, Amen.