

Hi KC Parents!

“Lord, please help me to control my tongue today. Help me to speak words of life to those around me. I want to be an encourager and not a discourager; a builder of dreams rather than a destroyer of destinies. I pray the Holy Spirit will help me be known as a woman who speaks life into those around her.”

- Sharon Jaynes, *The Power of a Woman's Words*.

As I read this devotional, I copied and saved this prayer by Sharon Jaynes, because it expresses my heart's deep desire for God to make this true of me. However, when it comes to matters of the tongue, and parenting, it's easier said than done!

I've shared before about my upbringing and how I grew up in a household with 11 siblings. It did not make for a quiet and calm home atmosphere...ever! My mom, bless her heart and who could blame her, was an explosive hot-head (I inherited that from her), and...as I think about it, so was my dad! So I received a double inheritance of the crazies.

Put it this way, I was not handed a shiny and fully packed toolbox when it came to raising kids and having control over my tongue!

I remember when I was pregnant with my first child and thinking ahead towards motherhood, I decided that I would never say “shut-up” to my children. It was used way too often in my home of origin and I didn't want my kids growing up hearing those words. They were hurtful to me and the anger expressed behind them, even more so.

Amazingly, I was actually able to keep that promise I made to myself for many years ... about 15! (Yep, you know where this is headed) Until ...they became teenagers!

One day, in particular, I found myself in a shouting match with my two sons over our house rules. Evidently, we were just too strict for their liking. We were the only parents in the world who wouldn't let their kids _____ (fill in the blank with any and everything!)

They were yelling, and being disrespectful. I was yelling too, trying to get control of the situation (not the best way to gain control). I was looking up at them, pointing my finger at their chests (as they both towered 2 feet over me by this time). It seemed I had no leverage and was unable to get a word in edgewise. The situation crescendoed, and all of a sudden, I reached my tipping point and shouted at the top of my lungs, “SHUT UP!”

“SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP!!!” —it rolled off my tongue like a locomotive! And it kept on chugging.... “SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP” ... it continued on the track for miles... it rolled onto infinity. Almost.

I'm certain that on that day, I made up for every day over the past 15 years, that I hadn't said those words!



My sons were shocked at first and then keeled over into hysterical laughter. I, on the other hand, was not amused and felt horrible for my display of anger and poor choice of words. Not my finest moment. Ay ay ay!

In truth, if “shut up” was the worst phrase I’ve ever used, that would be admirable. Our kids can drive us to do and say things we regret. I’ve said many things to my children and husband that I’d never want to be re-played in the cosmos for others to hear.

Sometimes I need to tell myself, to SHUT UP! I need to stop and think before I say something that will cause residual hurt and damage to the ones I love the most. My husband, kids, and grandchildren.

From lovely prayers to real life, we are not left alone to deal with our untamed tongues, Thank God! He is the faithful and forgiving one who helps us in our weaknesses. Over the years, with God’s patience, love, and the fruit of the spirit at work, I have made some strides in this area. We can pray this prayer in confidence and faith knowing that God will hear and answer us. In fact, take a moment and pray this prayer out loud right now.

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Blessings,
Viv Stone