**What Can St. Francis De Sales Teach Us About the Self-Mastery of the Tongue?**

***“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that is due time he may exalt you.***

***1 Pt 5:6***

St. Francis De Sales has a way of drawing attention away from ourselves and directing it towards Christ. Anyone who has carefully read [***Introduction the Devout*** ***Life***](http://www.philothea.de/devout-english.html)sees St. Francis’ method of guiding the person towards the practice of authentic virtue. The key to his method revolved around leading the person to those virtues most suited to him. In other words practice what is more practical and prudent in your journey to Christ. If praying the rosary every day is not your cup of tea seek another method of entering into communion with Christ.

There is a practicality in St. Francis’ [Salesian methodology](http://www.sdb.org/en/Education_System/Preventive_System) of Reason, Religion and Kindness echoed throughout this great work that tells us to just shut up and listen. We often forget that at times it’s best to say nothing at all in most situations. Imagine what the evangelistic effectiveness of a silent retreat can offer to some of us who simply need to say nothing and listen intently.

**The Mastery of the Our Tongue**

The reality of the human condition is that our voices tend to speak speak louder than our souls. Just read any blog and you’ll clearly see humanity’s need to yap about everything. A good priest friend of mine once told me; “Marlon, you don’t have to say a damn thing, they already know where you stand!” What he was reminding me was that the best teaching moments are those where practically nothing is said because my genuine Christian witness speaks for itself. St. Francis De Sales reminds us that all of us have the virtue of silence meaning we have the ability to control our tongue; the problem is we simply choose not to.

There is a value in [silence](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgNj2Sf_mgo) where if practiced faithfully presents a unique opportunity to foster an [intimacy with Christ that is beyond words.](http://www.amazon.com/Silence-Shusaku-Endo/dp/0800871863)  It’s not about my blog post necessarily but instead it’s the one on one encounter with someone who simply needs a servant of the Gospel who is perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48).

Mastering our tongue believe it or not is possible and an actual practice in true freedom. Keep in mind that as long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God, there is the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and thus growing in perfection of failing and sinning ([CCC 1732](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm)). Hence our tongue can be our greatest asset of evangelization or our greatest curse in driving someone away. The need some of us have to pontificate because of our multiple degrees, years of experience and ten-thousand followers on social media (not me) doesn’t mean we have to comment on everything. The great Doctor of the Church reminds us that our ultimate goal is spiritual maturity which means having the ability to listen first, speak second.

***“Beware then of useless murmuring and keep your tongue from slander; because no secret word is without result and a lying mouth destroys the soul.***

***Wis 1:11***