

# Never miss a good opportunity to shut up

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**By Lenny Cacchio**

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—The man asked a good question: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus asked him back, "What do you read in the law about that?"

The answer: " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "

Jesus agreed.

The man should have stopped there with his line of questioning. Scripture tells us he was a lawyer and that he was trying to trap Jesus. A man of his profession should have known better than to ask a question without knowing what the answer would be.

"Okay, so who is my neighbor?"

And by that question he revealed himself as a man who was more interested in finding loopholes than in finding truth (Luke 10:25-36). His speech revealed who he was.

Both Scripture and common sense warn us to be circumspect in our speech.

**Proverbs 17:28**—Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace. When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

**Proverbs 21:23**—Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

**James 1:26**—If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

**James 1:19**—Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

**Psalms 141:3**—Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.

**Proverbs 10:21**—The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.

**Proverbs 18:2**—A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.

**Proverbs 29:20**—Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

In a sense, though, I'm glad the lawyer asked Jesus his follow-up question. Without that, perhaps we would never have heard about the Good Samaritan and know what type of neighbors we need to be.