

Your Words

As children, many of us sang a song that included the words, “O, be careful little mouth what you say . . .” – an admonition to remember that our words are powerful and that what we say matters more than we can think or know. Hear a small portion of what the Bible has to say about the tongue (mouth):

James 3: 3-12 (NIV) – *“³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.*

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”

How we speak about ourselves and others matters to God. Words that are hurtful or condemning can crush our spirits, as well as those of the people around us. We don’t realize how potent everyday phrases are – how they open doors for the enemy to come in and begin to bring those words to fruition. For example, how many times have you heard the following:

- I’ll never change – it’s just the way God made me.
- This job is killing me!
- Everyone in my family dies of cancer/heart disease/stroke, etc.
- I’ll never lose this weight – I just have bad genes.
- That scared me to death!
- She’ll never amount to anything.
- He’s been this way ever since I married him – he’ll never change.
- I’m becoming my mother/father.
- Just you wait until YOU become a parent – then it’ll be payback time!
- He/she can’t help it – he/she’s ADHD; bi-polar; schizophrenic; paranoid; epileptic; mentally ill, etc., etc., etc.
- You’re so dumb – just a box of rocks.
- That’s the way it’s always been/that’s the way we’ve always done it.

And on and on it goes – words that curse ourselves and others. This is not what God has in mind for His people. He wants us to speak words of Life and Truth! Jesus didn't come to give us death – He came to give us life, and life abundant. Why do we use our tongues and words to tear down and destroy? We should be speaking blessings, not curses, over ourselves and everyone we come in contact with. How about exchanging the curses above for the following affirmations:

- With God's help, I can change – "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." (Phil. 4:13)
- I am Prince/Princess _____ - a son/daughter of the Most High King!
- My name is written in the Lamb's book of life.
- Nothing is too hard when I look to God for help.
- I have not been given a spirit of timidity or fear, but a spirit of power and of love, and a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7)
- I am not my mother/father – I'm me, and I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.
- I am a co-heir with Christ.
- I have a purpose and a destiny, given to me by my Heavenly Father.
- With God's help, I will be the best parent/spouse/sibling/child I can possibly be.
- The past is the past – I can't change it, but I don't have to let it dictate who I am and what I do today.

"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live . . ." (Deut. 30:19). God was very clear, through Moses, about the choice we are called to make - life over death. He even ties our choice to our children's ability to live! It doesn't get much stronger than that.

By continually affirming yourself and others, and thanking God for who you are and how much He loves you, satan won't be able to gain even a *toehold* in your life, much less a foothold. (Eph. 4:27) Let your words be as sweet as honey – *"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."* - (Prov. 16:24).

Be careful about teasing and kidding others – it isn't fruitful and more often than not, your words reflect your true feelings about yourself or someone else. "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them." (Matt. 15:18). Similarly – *"What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."* (Matt. 15:11).

Next time you get ready to say something about yourself or others, no matter how innocent, insignificant or trivial it may seem, ask the Lord to reveal to you the true significance of what you're about to say. He may have other plans for your words!