

Your Tongue

James 3:1-18

True or False: Words are just words.

What do you think about that question? When we were growing up, we would often repeat the saying: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me. Wow----when we said that we were definitely telling ourselves and others an untruth!!! Words can be very painful. A person's character can be revealed by studying the words he/she uses. If our words are 'just words', why does the Scripture remind us in Proverbs 18:21 that 'death and life are in the power of the tongue'? So, what do your words portray? Encouragement? Criticism? Edification? Anger? Exaggeration? Lying? Fault-finding? Slander? Love? Peace? And, the list could go on and on..... O Lord, help my words to be gracious and tender today, because tomorrow I may have to eat them!

Although many words can be, and have been, written about words, I would like to look at just a few ways in which words can be positive or negative.

WORDS ARE LIKE:

NEGATIVE

POSITIVE

Arrow

pierce/painful

point/show the way

(Psalm 64:3)

(I Samuel 20:20)

Fire

destroy

cleanse

(Exodus 22:6)

(Job 23:10)

Water

drown

quench thirst

(Genesis 6:17)

(Exodus 17:6)

Book

fantasy/lies

fact/truth

(Colossians 3:9)

(Zechariah 8:16)

Lightning

kill

enrich

(Job 1:16)

(Proverbs 8:6)*

Medicine**

poison

cure

(James 3:8)

(Proverbs 16:24)

*Soil is enriched with millions of tons of nitrogen released each year from the atmosphere by lightning and carried to the ground by rain drops

**Does Proverbs 16:24 indicate that kind words can influence others for good--- psychologically, spiritually, and physically? The use of our words as medicine depends on whether the tongue is controlled by the devil (Could we call him a 'quack'?) or the Great Physician.

I am sure that you could think of other ways to describe words---such as possibly like a hammer which can tear down or build up, according to how it is used. And, perhaps you would enjoy completing your own study of how words can help or hinder. I hope so!

Hopefully we can remember though, that each of us has the ability and the responsibility to use our small but powerful member, the tongue, to bring encouragement and restoration to those in need.

Prayer: Psalm 141:3---Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Psalm 19:14---Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. Amen.