

HARNESS YOUR WORDS

Words are powerful tools. They can build up; they can tear down. They can motivate; they can discourage. They can save a life; they can destroy a life. The ability to communicate well requires much learning and training. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.” (Proverbs 25:11-12).

Every person is accountable for what they say. Too often people dismiss their language and their conversations as inconsequential, assuming that their words are not a serious matter, which affect anyone in any significant manner. Jesus states otherwise. “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36-37) To consider that “every” word will be judged is sobering, but more so, the fact that a person’s words can condemn him is fearful. God does not ignore, nor condone carelessness, disrespect and irreverence.

Speaking properly requires constant conscientious effort and discipline. God calls men to speak responsibly. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:6) There is a way we ought to speak; there is a way we ought not to talk. This means we must be willing to learn what is proper and what is improper, what is good and what is bad. Then we must act according to godly instruction by exercising control – by bridling the tongue (cf. James 3:2). We must harness our own words. No one else can control what each of us say except for ourselves. There may be moments that we will have to pull back on the reins to force that bit to slow us down or even to stop us from what we are about to say.

The holy Scriptures warn regarding speech that is not proper. Filthiness, foolish talking and coarse jesting are not fitting to use (cf. Ephesians 5:3-6). God’s wrath will be poured out upon those who use such language, just as He will judge the fornicator, unclean person and idolater. A man’s words will be judged, and his words can cause him to lose his soul. “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6) Therefore, the Lord commands, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, ... let bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you” (Ephesians 4:29, 31).