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Words Play

Ready:

"Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." - Ephesians 4:29

Set

Throughout my years coaching basketball I have developed a dual purpose nickname. On the one hand some of my players call me Coach T because it is easier to say than my full last name. On the other hand, people jokingly call me Coach T because they say the “T” stands for technical. Obviously the first is easy enough to go with but the second, well, that second use gives me pause for concern.

As I look back over the years and the technical fouls that I have received, there is a realization that my mouth and the things I have allowed to come out of it have done more damage than good. Scripture is clear about the ability of the words we use to be equal parts constructive and destructive. When used properly we can encourage, correct, and even admonish those around us and most importantly our words can be used to draw others to the Lord. The opposite is also true in that our words can tear down people around us and push them even further away from the Lord.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul instructed them not to allow anything to leave their mouths that would be harmful or destructive to those around them. Instead he wanted them to use their words to encourage each other so that they could be lifted up. This applies to coaches and players alike in a very practical way. From how we communicate from coach to player, from player to player, and most certainly from coach/player/spectators to officials, we are all commanded by scripture to use our speech to build up those around us.

So how does this apply to you and me? As I looked back, I realized that something needed to change. I made a decision this past season to speak with respect to officials, and as a result, I finished the season without a single technical called against me. This led me to be able to have productive conversations during games with them and be a better witness for the Lord even in the midst of competition. What about you? What could you do to clean up your speech? How could you use your words to encourage and build up, rather than hurt and tear down your teammates, your coach and the officials?

Go

1. Take time to really think about how you communicate on the field or court. How can you respond differently to your coach?
2. How can you lift up your teammates?

3. What could you do differently in your interactions with officials to show them the respect they deserve?

Workout

Proverbs 15:1-2; Proverbs 17:27-28; James 1:19

Bible Reference:
Proverbs 15:1-2
Proverbs 17:27-28
James 1:19

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