

## **Double-Edged Sword**

### **Ready:**

"But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken." -Matthew 12:36

### **Set**

As athletes and coaches we know a lot about disciplining our bodies, but there is one muscle we often neglect to discipline: our tongues. Our gifts and skills may allow us to achieve athletic success, but our ability to maintain that success and honor God with it has much to do with how we use our words.

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created..." How did He create? By speaking. Throughout the next few verses of the chapter, it is revealed that God did not simply act, He used words to establish creation. "And God said..." This gives us the earliest demonstration of the power of words. Later, when "the Word became flesh" and Jesus came to live among us (John 1:14), we read that He used words to fight the temptations of Satan by declaring the Word of God (Matthew 4).

Did you know that there is supernatural power in the Word of God? Jesus showed us by example, and Hebrews 4:12 says that it is alive and active, sharper than a double-edged sword. By speaking God's Word, we can use the weapon God gave us to fight the spiritual battle going on around us (Ephesians 6:17). However, if we use our words to gossip, criticize, demean, murmur, complain, curse or mutter negative self-dialogue, we are going to reap negative results in our lives. We can't spend all day speaking words of the enemy and then spout a few verses and expect God to be moved. Our words need to be a reflection of who we are in Christ and filled with the promises of Scripture.

Our words also give a great indication of our beliefs, attitudes and maturity level. Therefore, it is critical that we use our words wisely and convey the right messages. With advances in technology we now have multiple ways to send messages. As a society it seems we have lost our collective filter and just share whatever comes to our minds. But words, whether spoken or written, have outcomes, and we should consider that before we rush to share what we're thinking.

Another key to words is being responsible with them. When we speak, we need to keep our words. As athletes and coaches, we commit to exercising, practicing, dieting and showing up to perform not because it is fun but because of the desired outcome. We need to also commit to do what we say we're going to do. We should not change our minds if something better comes along or if when the time comes we don't "feel like it." Matthew 5:37 states that we should let our "Yes" be "Yes," and our "No," "No." We can't say we are going to do something if we know we can't deliver. When we make a commitment, we need to follow through. In this way, our words become valuable, and when our words and actions are consistent we

establish character.

Because we are human, we will say the wrong things and offend people at times. James 3:8 assures that no human being can tame the tongue. But this doesn't say we can't do anything about our tongues. It teaches us that the process of trying to control it is unceasing.

Every day, every moment we need to be conscious of our words. We need to ask God to assist us. When we say the wrong things or hurt someone with what we speak, we need to humble ourselves and sincerely apologize. Remember that as an athlete and coach, people are not only watching, they are listening. We are in positions of influence and must stay focused on Christ in all aspects of our lives to bring Him glory.

## Go

1. Are the words you use in competition, conversation and social media honoring to God?
2. Do you follow through on your commitments?
3. How often do you verbally declare God's promises? Think of some situations in which this could be of benefit.
4. How can you encourage others today with your words?

**Workout** Proverbs 13:3 Ephesians 4:29 1 Peter 2:9

**Bible Reference:**

1 Peter 2



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