

## **Think Before You Speak**

### **Ready:**

The one who guards his mouth protects his life; the one who opens his lips invites his own ruin. -Proverbs 13:3

### **Set**

As a young coach I had a short fuse, especially when it came to dealing with men in stripes. It was hard keeping my mouth shut, and I often said things that got me in trouble. One game in particular, I thought my team was being treated unfairly, and I was quick to point it out. Late in the game, I stood up and yelled, "What?!" It was only one word, but the officials had heard enough. I got a technical foul that cost my team the game.

Controlling the tongue is a problem for many coaches and athletes. Many times, we create more problems with our mouths than with our actions. Why? In my case, it was because I wouldn't think before I spoke. Proverbs 13:3 tells us that if we can control our tongues, it will enhance our lives. But if we speak before we think, we can ruin everything.

Why does God want us to keep our tongues in check? When we speak before thinking, we usually do not honor Him with our speech. He would much rather we say nothing at all than speak too quickly. One of the best illustrations of this is when Christ was brought before Pontius Pilate and did not open His mouth to defend Himself against false accusations. He knew that God could have sent a thousand angels to defend Him, but He trusted the One who ordered the heavens and earth. The prophet Isaiah described Jesus this way: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

It's the most difficult thing in the world to tame the tongue, but God's Spirit living in us through the work of Jesus can help us think before we speak—even in the most challenging situations!

### **Go**

1. Is your tongue out of control?
2. How can you speak life to your teammates, coaches and even your opponents?
3. When was the last time your tongue got you in trouble in your sport and out of your sport?
4. Today, what can you do to start thinking before you speak?

### **Workout**

Proverbs 13, Matthew 5:36-37, Ephesians 4:29, James 1:19-20, 1 Peter 4:11

### **Overtime**

*God, so many times I have gotten myself in a bind by speaking before thinking. I have hurt others and have created tension on my team and among my friends. I pray that Your Holy Spirit would tame my tongue and guide my actions so I will bring honor to Your name. Amen.*



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