

Two Ounces of Power

n/a

Ready:

“And consider ships: though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So too, though the tongue is a small part [of the body], it boasts great things. Consider how large a forest a small fire ignites.”

- James 3:4-5

Set

Coach Sleepy Thompson was one of those coaches that everyone wanted to play for. He not only knew how to win football games, but also how to develop young men. As my high school football coach, I remember him as an encourager—a coach that instilled life into his players. We walked a little taller as a result of his living out one of his favorite sayings, “Accentuate the positive.” A day would not go by without Coach Thompson reminding us of that principle. It was short and sweet and yielded powerful results. He stressed accentuating the positive at every practice and made it an essential characteristic of our team. He focused on the good in players instead of the bad; the future instead of the past. His words gave us purpose and meaning. He understood that the most powerful two ounces of body weight he possessed were found in his tongue.

It has been said that the tongue weighs practically nothing, yet very few people can contain its power. The average human tongue weighs only two ounces, but it is considered one of the strongest muscles in the body. The tongue is a tough worker. Like the heart, it is always working—helping mix food, forming letters and sounds, filtering out germs. Even while we sleep it constantly pushes saliva down our throats. It never rests. I know this is not biology class, but the tongue is an amazing part of our body, and we need to spend more time focusing on its two ounces, as they reveal more about a person’s spiritual life than anything else. Truly, the tongue is the window to the soul.

The average person will have 30 conversations a day and produce about 16,000 words. In one year, your words would fill 132 books with 400 pages in each. Roughly 20 percent of your life, you will spend yakking away!

Where does the tongue get its incredible power? From the physical strength and work of a person’s heart. What a great metaphor! There is a Scottish proverb that says, “When the heart is full, the tongue will speak.” Often, people will utter something and then quickly say, “I didn’t mean that.” Actually, they probably meant it, they just didn’t mean to say it. We mean everything we say, but we often don’t plan to allow our tongues to expose our hearts.

If there is hatred in a person’s heart, the tongue will spew criticism. Fear in the heart will bring

negative words. An impure heart will produce foul speech. An undisciplined heart will result in sloppy language. Hurtful words will come from a wounded heart. But, conversely, if there is joy in a heart, encouragement will flow from the tongue. A peaceful heart will result in words of hope. Words of blessing will come from a secure heart. An honest heart will reveal a heart full of truth. In essence, the true key to controlling your tongue really is an issue of the heart.

As Christians, we struggle with our mouths. Our tongues slip because they live in a wet place. The book of James compares the tongue to fire because of the potential damage it can inflict. It's interesting how it is compared to fire and not water. A small glass of water wouldn't likely start a flood, but one small, careless spark can destroy thousands of acres. The tongue has the same potential, and James warns us that the tongue can pollute our whole body.

James 3:8 says, "...but no man can tame the tongue. It is restless evil, full of deadly poison." The truth is that we can't control it, but God can. We need to allow Him to take hold of our tongues and cleanse them. We've heard the saying, "What's wrong? Cat got your tongue?" Well, maybe we should pray to be asked, "What's wrong? God got your tongue?"

Today, accentuate the positive in your words. Ask God to control your tongue by purifying your heart. Understand that your words will either bring healing or hurt; blessings or burdens; truth or torture. Let others know you as someone who has a tame tongue that speaks truth and life with two small ounces of power.

Go

1. Do you live out Coach Thompson's favorite saying?
2. Why do you think it is so hard to control the tongue?
3. Why do you think the tongue is attached to the heart?
4. When is it the hardest for you to speak life? When is it the easiest?
5. What is one tangible way that you can remind yourself today and every day about the power and purpose of your words?

Workout

Psalm 34:13

Psalm 141:3

Isaiah 50:4

Matthew 12:34

Colossians 4:5-6

James 3:1-12; 4:11

Overtime

"Father, thank You for the power of our words. I confess that, on my own, I can't control it and often use it to speak negative words and destruction. Still, I desire to accentuate the positive. I want my words to bring life and deliver Your truth, but it is so hard to control my tongue. First, please touch my heart. Cleanse it and purify it. Make my heart right so that love spills out of mouth. Then, may these two ounces of power be used for Your glory. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen."

Bible Reference:

James 3



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