

## Damaging Words

n/a

### **Ready:**

"So also, the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do." –James 3:5a (NLT)

### **Set**

Have you ever turned your TV on to a ball game and witnessed a coach or player saying words you did not want your children to repeat? Foul language is common in athletics today. What makes using these words so attractive? Some say it motivates or is necessary to get a point across. If this is the case, how do teachers and preachers teach lessons of life without using these words? If this type of language is used to motivate, then why is over 90 percent of it used in a negative context?

James shares that the tongue is a very dangerous weapon. Often we are judged not by what we do, but by what we say. The best definition of swearing I have heard is that it is the expression of a weak mind trying to express him- or herself forcibly. Coach John Wooden was as successful as any coach, but did not use foul language to coach his team. Many coaches have had great success without using harsh language. What can we learn from them? I am sure controlling the tongue meant controlling other areas (Examples: anger and attitude) in their coaching as well.

Many athletes have said that swearing becomes a hard-to-break habit, but that guarding the tongue is a discipline that needs to be practiced, just like skills of a sport. Does swearing make us better players? Have we considered the damage words can cause? Let's raise the standard of our programs by raising the expectation of our language.

### **Go**

1. When do you find yourself struggling with foul language?
2. When your language goes south, what goes along for the ride?
3. How can you tame the tongue and use words that will not offend others?

### **Workout**

Matthew 5:37; James 3:1-12

### **Overtime**

Jesus, my tongue needs to be controlled by You. I pray that my words will encourage others, and that I will be an athlete known for lifting up others. Amen.

**Bible Reference:**

James 3



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