

## **Words Do Hurt**

### **Ready:**

“You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” – Matthew 5:11-12

### **Set**

There is a difference between trash-talking and using your words as a sword to inflict pain. Harmless banter can quickly become a heated exchange if our hearts are not right.

Due to harmful words, I have seen a historic cross-town rivalry turn ugly in just a few years. What once was a battle only on the field quickly turned into deep hate in every area of life between these two schools.

If you have ever been the victim of words used to harm, you know how deep the words can cut. Whoever said the phrase “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” probably wasn’t being honest with how badly words can hurt.

When we think of Christian persecution, we mostly think of people physically getting hurt because of their love of the Lord. Often, we dismiss other forms of persecution due to the extremity of the physical. In Matthew, we see Jesus validate and confirm that verbal persecution is expected. He mentions how the prophets in the Old Testament were verbally mocked, and even now, that same form could fall upon us.

If I were to adjust the “sticks and stones” saying with the knowledge of Matthew 5, I would say, “The words may hurt me, but I have a prize far greater than this temporary pain, and that’s a life spent with Christ in heaven.”

Don’t minimize words’ impact; they can cause harm. But take heart that we can rise above the wounds and set our eyes on the Kingdom to come.

### **Go**

- Have you ever been wounded by words?
- Have you let the heat of the moment on the field make you use words as a weapon?
- How can you rejoice when persecution comes your way?

### **Workout**

Proverbs 11:9

John 15:19-20

Ephesians 4:29

### **Overtime**

“Father God, You gave us mouths to speak; help us not use them for evil. Show us the line where our words turn from harmless to harmful. Remind us that though persecution will come our way, we have an eternal victory in You. Amen.”



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