

How to Avoid the Devastation 'Tongue Twisters' Can Bring

The Bible tells us “when words are many, sin is not absent” (Prov. 10:19, NIV). That’s because the tongue can cause quite a storm. Though only a small member of our bodies, it is very unruly and can create havoc in just moments.

Like a swirling tornado of ruinous words, a tongue twister can wipe out a relationship in seconds. One brief “touchdown” from this destructive verbal cyclone can instantly blow the roof off a peaceful household or tear down a bridge of trust that took years to construct. As dangerous and untamable as a rogue wind, the tongue, when unleashed, can create devastating—even irreparable—damage.

But what can we do about it? The Bible also declares “the human tongue can be tamed by no man. It is a restless (undisciplined, irreconcilable) evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8, The Amplified Bible).

Does that mean we are helpless to control it? No! Though the tongue may be as impossible to tame as the wind and waves, we do have a responsibility. In fact, the apostle James wrote, “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless” (James 1:26, NIV).

We may not be able to “tame” the tongue so that it permanently obeys us, but we are instructed to “keep a rein on” or to “rein over” the tongue. Our religion is worthless and ineffective if we cannot measure our words and discipline our tongues to speak only those things that are edifying, gracious and truthful. Sometimes keeping silent is better than even good words. “He who holds his tongue is wise,” Proverbs says (Prov. 10:19).

The Bible is full of Scriptures that teach us about the incredible force of the tongue and our obligation to “reign over” it. It is clear that God is concerned about the way we speak.

But there’s more. It is not just the actual choice of words God is interested in; it is the motive behind the words. The condition of the heart, which cultivates our speech, is His primary concern.

Jesus confirmed this truth in one of His dialogues with the Pharisees. He told them, “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34).

Jesus didn’t mince words. He let us know that if we store up evil things in our hearts, the poison will overflow into our mouths and be released through our conversations. Conversely, if we store up good things in our hearts, the flowing river of our words will be uncontaminated and full of life.

The Lord made it clear that it is not what enters into our mouths that defiles us, but what proceeds out of our mouths (see Matt. 15:11). In other words, we are not corrupt because we speak bad words; we speak bad words because of the corruption in our hearts. Our mouths and our hearts are linked together in an inseparable way. If we are unsundered in our hearts, we will be unsundered in our speech. God’s solution is for us to submit both heart and tongue to Him.

That is why David wrote, “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14). Solomon, too, acknowledged the connection between the head and the heart when he admonished: “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips” (Prov. 4:23-24).

Since the real heart of the issue then, is the issue of the

heart, it is important that we guard our hearts with all diligence and continue to submit to God's probing and testing. He alone knows our true condition. As long as we seek to please Him, as David did, and allow Him to purify our hearts, we can avoid the devastation tongue twisters bring.

Prayer power for the week of 9/29/2014

This week pray that the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart be pleasing to the Lord. Ask Him to create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. Pray that your words would be sweet and used to bring healing and restoration to others.

As you pray with a pure heart, pray for God to move upon our nation, reveal His truth, and turn it back to Himself. Thank Him for His continued protection and ask Him to expose those who devise wicked plans in opposition to His will for our nation, Israel and the rest of the world. (Ps. 19:14; Prov. 4:23-24).