

A Word Worth a Thousand Pictures

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John preaching in Seoul, Korea

Someone once said, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” however Don Chaney, a radio-advertising salesman once observed:

“You give me a thousand words, and I’ll take the Lord’s Prayer, the Twenty-Third Psalm, the Hippocratic Oath,

a sonnet by Shakespeare, the Preamble to the Constitution, Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, and I’ll still have enough words left over for just about all of the Boy Scout Oath. Now would you trade these one thousand words for any picture?”[2]

Then, there was the Creation: “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” God spoke the world into existence. He created light, heaven, land, vegetation, seasons, fish, birds, animals and people all with a word (Genesis chapter 1). The Apostle John

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wrote: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” (John 1:1). Don’t ever doubt the power of speech!

But our speech can be good or bad. James, the brother of Jesus, said, “The tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell,” (James 3:6). It’s been said that a person’s worth depends upon their two smallest organs: their heart and their tongue.

How can I learn to control my mouth? First let me say, “It ain’t easy!” (Bad grammar, but right

on target.) So how do we go about “tongue taming”? Here are some hints:

Granny’s observation was correct: “God gave us two ears and one tongue so we should listen twice as much as we talk.”

Before you open your mouth, ask yourself: “Is it necessary for me to say anything?”

Ask yourself, “Is it true?”

Finally, ask yourself, “Is it kind?”

Perhaps, you’ll share this prayer with me, “Lord, may my words be tender and kind for I may have to eat them.”



Photo by Oleksandr Pidvalnyi

Exercise

The book of Proverbs has always been a favorite. Read these passages and meditate on them today:

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent,” (10:19).

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing,” (12:18).

“Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad,” (12:25).

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger,” (15:1)

“Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding,” (17:21)

“The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body,” (18:8).

“Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words,” (23:9).

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver,” (25:11).