

Shed Unwanted Words

A Better Resolution Than Losing Weight



3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (NIV)

1. Start by _____ (vv.1-2)

2. Never Forget _____ (vv.3-4)

3. Be _____ (vv.5-6)

4. Rely _____ (vv.7-12)

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. It is recommended that you take time this week to write out your response to each of these questions. This will help to drive home the point of today's message and will help you apply the principles to your life situation.

1. Controlling what we say is admittedly one of the most difficult challenges we will ever face. Nevertheless, it is God's desire that, with his help, we learn to keep our mouths under control. Read Proverbs 18:21. What experiences have you had with being on the receiving end of "life words" – words that have significantly made a difference in your life for the good?

On the other hand, what experiences have you had with "death words" – words that have made a negative impact on your life?

2. Consider your conversation over the past week or two. How would you evaluate the quality of your words and their effect on others?
3. Sincere and graciously worded apologies can be powerful tools to restore and rebuild in situations where words have torn down. To whom would these type of words be appropriate? (Make a plan! When, how and where?)
4. It is probably true that many of the words that we speak throughout the week are useless in the lives of others. Read carefully Ephesians 4:29 (with special attention to the second half of the verse), and consider developing a personal strategy for replacing superfluous words with edifying words. How might you do this?
5. In your own words write out a prayer that expresses your resolve regarding your speech in 1999. Be sure to include an expression of total dependence on God for success in this area of your life.