

Don't Let Your Tongue Bite You by Rev. Daniel W. Randall

The ability to communicate correctly with each other is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Our inability to communicate is sometimes at the heart of many of our greatest and most serious problems. What we communicate and how we communicate with our tongue is of great importance! To the physician, it's merely a two-ounce slab of mucous membrane enclosing a complex array of muscles and nerves that enable our bodies to chew, taste, and swallow. Equally significant, it is the major organ of communication that enables us to articulate distinct sounds so we can understand each other. In the book of James chapter three, we are reminded that the problems of the tongue and communicating properly are not new problems, but ancient problems that demand daily attention and action.

James declares that our spiritual life and maturity as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ are shaped by our tongue. We can use the tongue to do harm by verbally abusing and demeaning others. Most bullying is verbal and masked in humor that harms. This is not the best use of our tongues. A better use of our tongue is to build up, instill hope, express love and give encouragement with the goal of lifting the spirit of others. James states that the tongue is small, yet it has great influence and power over the rest of the body. He compares it to a bit in the mouth of a horse, a rudder on a large ship, and a spark that can set the whole forest burning. Without the constraining and controlling power of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to tame the tongue from its natural tendency to hurt and harm. Only when the tongue is under the power of the Holy Spirit can it be used to heal not hurt. 1st Corinthians 13 reminds us that "Even though I can speak in the tongues of men and angels, if I have not loved I have gained nothing."

I want to suggest three ways we can use our tongues that will empower us to be authentic witnesses for our Lord Jesus Christ. To bring healing and hope instead of hurting and hate. First, all our words should bless others! Proverbs 12:18 says, "Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword--but wisely spoken words can heal." Even when we must share hard truths, we should always do so in Christian Love and Grace, always! We are to build up not tear down! Second, we are to use our tongues to praise God rather than poison life and curse His creation! A young lady named Sally, and her mother had a violent shouting match about the dent she put in her mother's car. After the confrontation, the father tried to console her. "What did your mother say about the dent in the car?" he asked. "Dad, do you want me to leave out the swear words?" "Please," he replied. Sally said, "Then she didn't say anything." The mother failed to realize that words also can leave "dents" in people, but more than that they can poison the soil of a relationship. Dents can be hammered out of a car--they are much more difficult for human beings. Third, allow our words to be a voice through which Christ can speak words of encouragement to others. It is living the simple prayer, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Our words need to be dedicated to God. God is concerned about every word we speak and desires us to consecrate it to Him.

Two kinds of birds fly over our deserts: the Hummingbird and the Vulture. The vulture sees nothing but rotting meat because that is what the vulture looks for. They thrive on a diet of dead and decaying things. The hummingbird flies over the same desert and sees instead the tiny blossoms of the cactus flower. They buzz around until they find the colorful blooms hidden from view by the rocks. Each bird finds what it is looking for. We all do. The same can be said for our words and the destination and purpose we have for them. Don't let your tongue bite you or anyone else. Use it for the Glory of God.