

## INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Often our greatest concern about our speech is the detrimental effect it has on our relationships. There is a greater concern. It grieves the heart of God. Every thing we say and do, we do before our holy God. CORAM DEO, before the face of God.

Putting off sinful speech is not enough. Whenever we are called to put off a sinful pattern, we are always called to put on a holy pattern. "But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, and the truth is in Jesus; that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

**Truth** - Psalm 119 is full of Scriptures regarding the power, value and beauty of God's Word. "Speaking the truth in love" is most aptly applied to speaking the truth of God's Word into another's life and heart. God's Word spoken with love is a powerful combination.

**Encourage** - everyone benefits from words of encouragement. Look for positive things about a person and make a point to point them out to him/her. When you pray for someone, drop him/her a note or mention to him/her that you brought him before the throne of grace today. " ... and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words" Acts 15:30-32.

**Edify** - "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing" 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

**Bless** - "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" Romans 12:14.

**Instruct** - "The wise in heart will be called prudent, and sweetness of the lips increases learning" Proverbs 16:21.

**Exhort** - "exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today', lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" Hebrews 3:13.

**Admonish** - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" Colossians 3:16.

**Rebuke** - "Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear" Proverbs 25:12.

**Comfort** - "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad" Proverbs 12:25.

## BUT HOW? DOING IT.

**1) Repent.** "When we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

**2) Pray. Acknowledge that you need God's help.** "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" James 1:5.

**3) Each morning ask God to be the guardian of your mouth.** "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" Psalm 141:3.

All scripture is from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

## DIGGING DEEPER

For more help on this topic or for information on the multi-faceted ministry of America's KESWICK call 800.453.7942 or visit our website at [www.americaskeswick.org](http://www.americaskeswick.org).



601 Route 530 • Whiting, NJ 08759-3599  
800.453.7942 • 732.350.1187  
fax 732.849.1392  
[colony@americaskeswick.org](mailto:colony@americaskeswick.org)  
[www.addictionrecovery.org](http://www.addictionrecovery.org)

Addiction Recovery | Christian Events  
Conference & Retreat Facilities | Training & Resources

## THE TONGUE



## The Tongue

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

by DIANE M. HUNT, M.S., M.A.  
Director of Addiction Recovery Ministries



Transformation Resource Series



## The Tongue

God has given us a wonderful resource, words. Our words can bring the best out in others, or the worst. We can empower others to strive and reach their potential, or we can tear them down or hold them back. Like any attribute, in the power of the Holy Spirit, our words can be a fantastic asset. In the power of the flesh, they can hurt and emaciate. It requires that we purpose in our hearts to use our words for God's purposes not our own.

**It requires that we purpose in our hearts to use our words for God's purposes not our own.**

*"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."* – ROMANS 6:13

It is eye-opening to realize that those are our only two options. That means that every word we speak is either an instrument of righteousness or an instrument of unrighteousness. Which do you purpose to be? A tool in God's hand, or a tool in Satan's hand? Sobering, isn't it?

No discussion about the tongue would be worth its weight without considering James 3:5-10.

*"Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell ... No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."* – JAMES 3:5-10

The tongue has potential for great harm, but Paul tells us that it has great potential for good.

*"Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

– EPHESIANS 4:29

The power of our words! Lest we think it is as easy as "keeping our mouth shut," Matthew tells us it is more a heart issue than a mouth issue. *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"* Matthew 12:34. What comes out of our mouth is a reflection of the issues of our heart. We've all said, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean that!" Yes, we did, because out of our heart our mouth speaks. Therefore, holding our tongue is not sufficient because the thought and heart issues still remain. What we need is a whole new attitude of the heart that is then reflected in our speech.

### INSTRUMENTS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

#### *Sinful Use of Speech*

**Silence** - pouting, withdrawing, the cold shoulder.

**Sarcasm** - literally means the cutting of flesh. This is meaning the opposite of what is actually said. Proverbs 12:18, *"Reckless words pierce like a sword."*

**Gossip** - sharing information, true or false, about another that has the potential of damaging their reputation. Sharing that information with someone not directly involved in the solution of the problem. Proverbs 26:20, *"Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases."*

**Nagging** - repeating a matter over and over. *"A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike; Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand"* Proverbs 19:13. (Men are not exempt from such sinful speech).

**Deception** - deception comes in many forms. It can be an outright untruth, or it may be a shade of the truth but leave out some details with the intention to

**What we need is a whole new attitude of the heart that is then reflected in our speech.**

mislead, or not saying something to "keep the peace" or "avoid his wrath." *"Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth to his neighbor"* Ephesians 4:25.

**Idle Words or Coarse Jest** - Matthew 12:36-37, *"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

**Making our point** - what is it that makes us think that what we have to say is so vital? Often in making our point we say the same thing in a variety of ways. We just won't let the conversation rest until we have had our say and feel we are understood. *"With our tongue we will prevail, our lips our own; who is Lord over us?"* Psalm 12:4.

**Just Telling it Like it is** - "I'm just telling the truth." There are a variety of ways that we communicate that we are "just speaking our minds." The Bible tells us we are to be "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). Do you know that speaking the truth without love ceases to be truth because it is tainted by our sinful hearts. "Telling it like it is" is 'truth' as you see it. Just speaking our mind can be sin. We hide behind that with the idea that, "it's just the way I am," but that is a cop-out. God is in the process of growing every believer in the image of Jesus Christ. Our sinful patterns of speech are in the process of being transformed for His glory.

**Humor** - Humor, rightly used, is a gift of God created by Him for our pleasure. However, misused, it can be wielded like a dagger. The old adage "There is many a truth spoken in jest" is very true. Often our humor can be hurtful and cutting. Sometimes it is intentional and other times it is unintentional.

**Grumbling and Complaining** - Grumbling and complaining are outward evidence of a discontented spirit. Ultimately our complaining is against God. We are essentially saying God didn't do right by us. Philippians 2:14, *"Do all things without complaining and disputing..."* 1 Timothy 6:6, *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain."*