

Words

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Jesus and the inspired New Testament writers had far more to say about our speech (words, tongue) than about baptism or the Lord's Supper. That takes nothing away from the importance of immersion or communion. It simply exposes the need to pay heed to what we say.

Is this a salvation issue? Listen to Jesus: *"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"* (Matthew 12:36-37). "Idle" literally means "without work." We speak idle words when we're too lazy to do the work of thinking first. We carelessly "shoot from the lip!" We would do well to "start brain before engaging mouth."

It's hard work to control our speech. James observed that *"no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison"* (James 3:8). Though we can't tame it, we must control that terrible tongue! *"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless"* (1:26).

Paul exhorted, *"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers"* (Ephesians 4:29). Apply that to your keyboard too! Take a second look before you send that post on social media. Are you glorifying God when you post vulgar words? Surely your vocabulary isn't so limited that you can't make your point without using crude language!

"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:6).

Two Tales Of One Child

He was a smiling, energetic little boy with a gleam in his eye and big dreams in his heart. But there was no one to mentor, inspire, challenge, mold, guide, and encourage him. He knew nothing of his potential or opportunities. He was ignored, if not put down. Listlessly, he drifted along. Ultimately, along the way, those with dishonorable, self-serving objectives, saw in him the perfect pawn for their untoward plans. He was initiated into crimes and misdemeanors (if only ethically and morally), growing more expert and hardened in them over time. Once the raw material for greatness, this rudderless ship not only ran himself aground but recruited other rudderless ships, once potentially productive and positive like himself.

He was a smiling, energetic little boy with a gleam in his eye and big dreams in his heart. But there were mentors to inspire, challenge, mold, guide, and encourage him. He became driven and determined to make use of his potential and became productive and a positive force in this world. Not only was he wildly successful, but he found others to discover their direction and dreams.

No, I am not telling the story of one child. This is the composite of every child. Children come into this world in complete innocence, a clean slate whose story is written with the help of the influences each one encounters. What a powerful stewardship we have been entrusted with. While our primary charges are those children born to our own homes (Proverbs 22:6), how short-sighted to end our mission just there. In Matthew 18, Jesus turns our focus on little children. He says to become like them, receive them, protect them, and not despise them. How are you doing in your stewardship? As you look into the sweet faces of the young and influential, do you see your legacy and your influence for good in them? Do not ignore them or leave them to someone else. Lead the little ones to Jesus.

--Author Unknown (via Athens, AL)

We Are Not Yet Home

"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you'" (Exodus 13:19).

Joseph had enjoyed a distinguished career in Egypt. Next to Pharaoh, he had held the highest position in that country. Yet those long years of faithful service never made him feel he really belonged to Egypt. Before he died, he made his people swear to take his mortal remains back to the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Lord expects His people to be faithful in their earthly positions and responsibilities. By so doing, they honor Christ and His church. They are never to become so attached to this world that they prefer it to the land of promise. Our home is not here, but in heaven. Here we are pilgrims and sojourners on our way to a better place (1 Peter 2:11)

Peter thus wrote: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you"* (1 Peter 1:3-4).

--Glen Walton (via *Old Paths*)

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Your mind is a garden

Your thoughts are the seeds

You can grow flowers

Or you can grow weeds