

# WORDS CAN'T BREAK BONES, BUT THEY CAN BREAK HEARTS

By Keith Greer

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

Our tongues can get us into a lot of trouble. An uncontrolled tongue can inflict mental and emotional pain. "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." {James 3:5,6} Following are some simple tongue-related thoughts to remember...

**A soft answer.** "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." {Proverbs 15:1} When another person says something that hurts or cuts you, think before you respond. "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." {James 1:19, 20} A soft reply to hurtful words shifts the problem back to the other person. God's people need to remember that our personal conduct tells folks about who we are. God's instructions are the best course to follow. Try it and see.

**Practice the golden rule.** "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." {Matthew 7:12} Practice doing what you would like for others to do. Don't you want others to speak to you truthfully, carefully, and with consideration for your feelings? If so, practice these same traits in your own speech. Think about it—if you prefer not to be yelled at or humiliated in public, do you really think others will like it any better?

I've heard people make unkind remarks and then say, "**I'm sorry I didn't mean to say that.**" Wrong! One does not speak any words until he forms them in his heart. {Matthew 15:18-20} Sadly, too many times we have just revealed what was already allowed to be stored up in our hearts. Let's be cautious about the words we use to express our emotions. You can always apologize for what you say, but the damage and hurt have already been done. Think first! \*\*\*