

Building Blocks or Stumbling Blocks

If your lips would keep from slips,
Five things observe with care,
To whom you speak, of whom you speak,
And how, and when, and where

Words describing CHS soccer season by team members:

- Amazing Historical Fantastic Magical Fun
- Champions Successful Awesome Phenomenal Life Changing
- Memorable Victory the Best Buckets Unforgettable
- Incomparable Adversity

Proverbs 18:20-21; 13:3

Words Destroy—Guard Your Tongue

- Marriage, kids, friendships
- Faith, dreams, attitude
- Future
- *When you have nothing good to say, say nothing at all!*
- **James 1:26; 3:2-10**

Stumbling Blocks or Building Blocks

Cold words freeze, hot word scorch
Bitter words cannot be swallowed
Kind words soothe, gentle words comfort
Encouraging words strengthen and heal

Words Build—Don't Stay Silent

- Mark Twain—I can live for two months on a good compliment
- Power Words
 - I love you I am proud of you You are doing a great job
 - I appreciate you You are awesome THANK YOU
- **Philippians 2:3-4**
- **Hebrews 3:13**

At age 15, Perry Tanksley became a Sunday school dropout. "No one will miss me," he assured himself. So he was surprised a week or two later when Mr. Tisdale, a bus driver who taught Perry's Sunday school class came to his home. Mr. Tisdale's visit made such an impression on him. Maybe it was the concern revealed on Mr. Tisdale's face. Or maybe it was the fact that Mr. Tisdale had walked a mile to tell him he was missed. Whatever it was, it worked. Perry Tanksley returned to Sunday school and later became a well-known pastor.

Twenty-five years later Tanksley felt a strong urge to write a letter of appreciation to his old teacher. In his letter he wrote, "Mr. Tisdale, had you not walked up the road that day and placed your hand on the shoulder of a discouraged boy who needed desperately to know somebody cared, it well may be that I would not be a pastor today. **Thank you very much.**"

A week later Tanksley received a reply. It read: "Dear Perry, Your letter came shortly after a near-fatal heart attack. Your words were better for me than a doctor's prescription. You see, I'd been reviewing my life and wondering if I'd ever done anything worthwhile. How glad and **thankful** I am that I walked that mile to win you back for the Sunday school. Your letter has brought me encouragement and comfort."

Psalm 15:1-3

Discussion Guide

Primary Text: James 3:2-10

In chapter 3, James has made it clear that genuine faith works. If God has changed your heart through the new birth, the saving faith that He granted to you will inevitably show itself in a life of good deeds. But now he moves from the generality of good deeds to the specifics of the words that you speak. Genuine faith yields to Christ's lordship over your tongue. With David (Ps. 141:3), all true believers will pray, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips." While the monster may never be totally tamed, if you know Christ as Savior, you are engaged in the ongoing battle in learning how to tame the terrible tongue.

Study Questions

Why is it so difficult to control what you say?

In what ways can our words be a damaging force?

What can we do if we have already been guilty of using our words recklessly?