

## “Training” The Tongue

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by Wayne Goff

**I**n our Wednesday night Bible study we have been looking at the proper use of the tongue. One question concerned the “training” of the tongue. “Training” means to “teach a skill or behavior,” and since the tongue itself has no mind but is only a tool of the human mind, it can be “taught” by teaching the mind. As simple as this concept is, it needs to be repeated often. The body, including all of its parts, is an *instrument* for the mind. **Romans 6** discusses this in detail and places responsibility for the body’s actions on the person housed in that body! Even if someone is born with genetic predispositions, that person can control the body with the mind, and is obligated to do so. But back to “training” the tongue.

The New Testament teaches us how to properly use our tongue in many places. What good would these instructions do if we could not “train” the tongue to act in a “controlled” manner? So God expects us to both train and control the tongue.

**Ephesians 4:15** ~ *“That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”* The truth will find a more receptive audience if it is spoken out of love, and not out of bitterness, anger, sarcasm, or superiority.

**Ephesians 4:29** ~ *“**Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification**, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”* Some people think that they have no ability to control their cursing. They have had a bad habit for so long that it just comes natural to them. Some curse without even knowing that they are doing it! But God expects us to **respect** those who hear us, and “corrupt” words **disrespect** all those to whom they are spoken. If we thought more of our neighbors than we do of ourselves, then we would do a better job with our words.

**Colossians 4:6** ~ *“**Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt**, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”* Personally, I enjoy salt *so much* that my wife has to remind me to “taste the food before you salt it!” So I can appreciate how speaking with grace makes our words more tasty, more palatable, permitting our “*answer*” or “*response*” to others to be easier to accept. Let us not drive away people from the truth by our attitude.

**1 Thessalonians 2:7** ~ *“But we were **gentle** among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.”* Paul taught the Thessalonians in a kind, gentle way when he converted them. But he still told them the truth! We cannot be so afraid of offending others that we compromise the truth! On the other hand, we can be both kind and firm in standing for what is right.

**2 Timothy 1:13** ~ *“Hold fast **the pattern of sound words** which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”* So there **is** a standard of truth that is found in “*the pattern of sound words*” taught by the apostles and prophets — the New Testament. Teaching error is “unsound,” and therefore spiritually sick and unhealthy.

360502