



The Crest 6.4 Experiment

In December of the year 2000 I heard a wonderful story on the radio about a father that was trying to illustrate the destructive powers of the tongue to his teenage son. The story goes on to say that the father bought a new plank and hung it between two posts in their back yard. The father then gave the son a box of nails and a hammer and instructed the boy to drive a single nail into the board each time he was tempted to say something hurtful or sarcastic in the home rather than saying the actual words.

The son thought it odd but heeded his father's instructions and began that very day driving the nails – one per incident into the plank. Several weeks, and four boxes of nails later, the boy approached his father and said he understood the meaning of the lesson and no longer felt a need to drive nails into the plank. The father smiled and asked his son to get a bucket and his hammer and led the boy to the back yard. The father then asked his son to remove all of the nails and place them in the bucket.

When he was finished removing all of the nails he turned to his father and asked, 'What now?' And the father turned the boy to face the board and together they surveyed the damage to the once pristine plank. He explained to the boy that the nails were like our words of hurt and that like our words ~ even when the nails were withdrawn the damage remains.

This prompted me to conduct an experiment (of illustrative purpose) in our home. The experiment involved a 6.4 oz. tube of Crest toothpaste and our sons. I gave them the toothpaste and instructed them to empty the contents onto a paper plate and offered them a reward if they could return the toothpaste to its original container.



They were allowed to use any tools or implements available to perform the task and they were very creative in their techniques. But try as they may ~ they were unable to get the toothpaste back into the tube.

After numerous attempts and quite some time they expressed that they were unable to complete the task. It was then that I shared the analogy of releasing hurtful remarks and trying to get them back. The boys' efforts were rewarded just the same and we enjoyed a few laughs as we reflected on this lasting illustration.

God's word makes many references to the power of the tongue. If you were to visit **Bible Gateway** online at this link <http://bible.gospelcom.net/> and type the word tongue into the keyword search you would find pages of results that make for worthwhile reading. The following are two very clear statements about our tongues and their powerful impact on our walk with the Lord as well as our relationships with others...

Proverbs 6: 16-19 in the NIV tells us:

¹⁶ There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
¹⁷ haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
¹⁹ a false witness who pours out lies
and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

And the book of James 3: 1-12 says:

¹Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

⁵Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

I don't know about you but I have struggled with this area of my walk. I have shared words of encouragement and edification ~ and I have uttered words that would make a sailor blush and then tried to reel them back in (much like the boys with the toothpaste) to no avail and I am confident that most of us have had similar experiences. These may

manifest themselves as words spoken in anger and words spoken against one another in gossip or perhaps words spoken in retaliation when we react poorly to situation.

Whatever the reason we use to justify our words ~ Our Heavenly Father must feel very strongly to have shared so many of His words with us in the scriptures about this subject. Let us encourage one another to open His word and seek the truth and wisdom of His instruction regarding our words and the power of the tongue so that we wouldn't deceive ourselves and buy into what is acceptable by society today.

May the Lord continue to bless you all.