

● **WARM UP**

A few years ago I spoke carelessly about a colleague I worked with to some students I was coaching in a rugby team. I didn't mean any harm and to be honest what I said was not slanderous, only slightly derogatory. To me it was a joke situation, a smart comment in passing and something that had I said it to the person it was about, he would probably have laughed.

The trouble was, one of those students repeated my comment and the person heard it third hand. He didn't laugh, but was deeply offended. Now, no offence was meant and no deep confidence betrayed. The net result, though, was that my friendship with that colleague was ruined. This was a work situation and although I apologised, the sense of hurt over a seemingly small thing was so deep that the relationship was never the same.



● **READ** 1 Kings 21, Proverbs 18:7-8, Ecclesiastes 10:12-13, Luke 4:22

● **BACKGROUND**

In 1 Kings 21 we find the story of Ahab and Naboth's vineyard. Ahab the king of Israel wanted to buy the vineyard from its owner but was unable to bear a verbal refusal and went into a sulk. Here we see the power of an answer that someone didn't want to hear and in this case, the outcome was tragic for both. How often do we overreact to words spoken?

● **QUESTIONS**

1 In James 3:8 we read that *"The tongue cannot be tamed, it is a restless evil and a deadly poison."* Comment on situations in your experience where there has been trouble over what someone has said.

2 The other side of the coin is that words spoken rightly can build up and heal. Scripture tells us in Isaiah 50:4, *"How good is a word in season to him that is weary."* Share some situations when you have found this to be the case.

3 What can we do to ensure that we speak positive words?

4 How can we limit the damage of negative words spoken?

● **CONSIDER THIS**

We know that words spoken reveal what is in our hearts (*"Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks"* – Luke 6:45). So let us ask God for a right heart so that the words we speak into situations throughout our day might be healthy and positive.

The Lord Jesus said, *"By your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned."*

Matthew 12:37

What is God saying to me?

● **LET'S PRAY**

● **REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD'S POWER**

Quite a number of years ago I twisted my whole back and I was badly injured. A few months later I went along [to a meeting]. [Bill] asked for those who have back problems to stand up. I stood up and Bill prayed and I felt the heat go down through my back. I went home that night completely healed. Greg

