

Alley Rundown—January 31st, 2021

Today's Bible Story: Say What You Need to Say (Use Words Wisely) • *Ephesians 4:29*

Today's Key Question: Why do your words matter?

Today's Bottom Line: Use your words wisely.

Monthly Memory Verse: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much...”
Luke 16:10a (NIV)

CG: Dude Perfect Filler Videos

WORSHIP: Follow You Anywhere

Supplies Needed: Flip Chart Paper/Room White Board (1 Pad/Board per Campus) and Sticky Notes (1 Pad)

“Hey, everyone! Thanks for being with us today. I’ve been thinking! Whether you’re having a good day or a bad day, it always feels great when your friends take the time to encourage you. Does anybody out there agree? (Pause for response.) Yeah, I see those hands. You know what, though? Whether or not we admit it, I’m convinced it’s true of all of us. All of us like it when someone notices us and encourages us. Like when you are rocking a new pair of kicks and one of your friends makes a big deal about them, it makes you feel awesome. After you receive a new haircut or hair style and your classmates mention how nice it looks, you feel fantastic! Or the moment you walk off the basketball court after a solid game, the positive words you hear from your teammates and fans makes you feel great!”

“That’s EXACTLY what I want to do today! I want to share those positive vibes with someone in the audience. Does anybody have a buddy they want affirmed on stage today? (Pause for response.)”

*Select a volunteer who **YOU KNOW** would be a good sport for this activity. You can choose an adult or kid, but the following is written as if you chose a kid.*

“Thanks for joining me on stage today! On the board, we have a variety of words to describe someone. As an audience, I’d like you to take turns picking words that accurately describe them and will allow us to build up *[Name of kid]*. For this exercise, we may need to lean on *[Name of kid]*’s friends for help since they know them better than the rest. Go ahead! Let’s pick out some words!”

As the audience selects words, write down the positive word on a sticky note and hand the words to kid volunteer to stick all over their clothing. After half a dozen or so words, move on.

“Wow. That was awesome. Thank you so much for your help affirming *[Name of kid]*. You all did a great job picking out incredibly encouraging words! Let me try to put these words together into a complete sentence to encourage our friend here.”

Piece together a sentence using all the positive words.

“I have to say that these words are incredibly fitting for our friend. It is very true *[Name of kid]* is *[list off some of the positive words]*. However, great compliments are not the only words we hear from others every day. Sometimes we hear words that are negative. What if we looked at some negative words to describe people? (write some negative words on the board) Obviously, these words do not describe our friend here, but I would love *[Name of kid]* to stand here to represent all the kids who have been called these names.”

Write down negative words on a post-it, then take words and hand them to the kid volunteer to stick on top of the positive words. After half a dozen or so words, move on.

"As we look at these words, they can be pretty harsh. Nobody wants to be called 'LAZY' or 'WEIRD.' (To kid) Please know we love the fact that you joined us today and love the ways God has uniquely wired you. Thanks for your help today."

Publicly affirm kid volunteer and send volunteer back to their seat.

"It's always great to hear someone say something nice about you—whether you are in front of your friends here in *The Alley* or being complimented by a teacher, coach, or parent! Well-placed, positive words have the power to change your day for the better! A great compliment can build us up, change our outlook, improve our attitude, and so much more! But how does it feel when someone uses words to tear us down?"

"When I was younger, I learned a saying that goes, 'Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.' On the surface, that makes sense. A heavy rock or sturdy stick could cause me a ton of pain! As hard as someone tries to hurl words my way, their words will never cause me to break a bone. But words are a little more complicated than that."

"If we are being honest, we all know that is not true. I remember very clearly taking off my shoes after practice in seventh grade and one of my classmates claiming my feet smelled bad. Others joined in laughing and eventually the entire locker room was making fun of my feet for weeks! A poorly placed negative statement can also change your day . . . for the worse."

"Often times, we don't think twice about using words positively or negatively. We just say what we are thinking. But how we use our words, regardless of who we are talking to, might be more important than we think! The question we need to answer: how can we make sure the words we use actually help people rather than hurt them?"

"It's a great question. When we have questions like this, the first place we should turn for answers is the Bible. The people who wrote the Bible experienced life with God. God inspired them to write down what they learned so we could learn all these thousands of years later. Let's see what we can find that can help us learn how to use our words wisely. Here's this week's Episode!"

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 10:00)

"We can't lose sight of Paul's words. Let's look at them one more time.

Open Bible to Ephesians 4:29 (NIV) and read.

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

"We must recognize our words are powerful. Words can build up others, break down walls of separation, and repair relationships. Everyone is at their best when we choose to honor God with the words we speak to others! This happens when we speak words that will build up and help the people around us!"

"It is NOT easy to avoid bad attitudes, mean words, or what Paul called "unwholesome" or evil talk. However, it helps knowing that what Paul is talking about is trustworthy and true because his words were included in the Bible. So when Paul says to build others up, I listen. And if you need an example of this, look no further than Jesus. Throughout Jesus' life, He used words of hope and truth. Never did He speak words of destruction or harm. His words pointed to what was true about God in a way that people could understand!"

"When we use our words wisely, others will know they can trust us. Use words that build others up and help them. Choose words that point others to God. Don't be afraid to say you're sorry because there may be days you will not choose building words. In addition, others may say words that hurt you and your loved ones. Be willing to forgive and still choose words that build others up even if you don't feel like it."

"As we wrap up our talk today, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

“Why do your words matter? So many of you want to make a big impact on the world around you, and I LOVE that. One of the biggest ways you can bring meaning to those around you is by choosing your words carefully. Let's pray and ask God to help us use our words to help others.”

Lead group in a prayer related to what they just heard then dismiss to “All Together Activities”.