

ALLEY Rundown – January 27- 28, 2024

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: Suppose you can be trusted with something very little. Then you can also be trusted with something very large. Luke 16:10a (NIV)

SLIDE: Theme

Hey, everyone! Feels like we were just wishing everyone a Happy New Year, and now we've already reached the end of January! Hopefully you've been working hard and will continue to hit the ground running in February! But let's not get ahead of ourselves. We still have a lot going on around here! I need four volunteers who really think they know their animals for a game called 'Pet Password'!

SLIDE: "Pet Password"

Host chooses four volunteers and puts them into teams of two.

Alright, here's how to play. One of you will be the Clue Giver, and the other will be the Clue Guesser. When I say go, the Clue Guesser will close their eyes, and I will hold up the answer card for everyone else to see. Now, no one say the answer! The Clue Giver will give a one-word clue . . . no animal noises . . . just a single-word clue. For example, if the answer is 'duck,' the Clue Giver might say 'bill' or 'pond' or 'feathers.' Make sense? Great! The Clue Guesser will then make one guess as to what animal they think it is. If they guess incorrectly, it passes to the other team, where their Clue Giver will say their own one-word clue. Their Clue Guesser will get a chance to guess. The longer it takes, the more clues you end up getting, and the easier it should get. Got it? Great! Let's do it!

Host holds up the new answer card each time. Giver and Guesser alternate on each team each round. Play several rounds as you have time.

(After the game) Now that was a lot of fun! And you all did GREAT—you really DO know your animals!

I have a question for you. Has someone ever used their words to encourage you? Maybe to cheer you up, to help you decide, or maybe to pay you a compliment that meant a lot at the time? (Get responses.) Yeah, me too!

Communicator shares a personal story of a time someone used their words in a positive way to build them up. Don't make the "building" connection strong yet. Just tell the story. Use the following example as inspiration for your own or use this as a hypothetical situation.

I remember this one time in sixth grade when it seemed like no one in my class was getting along. Kids were trying to act cool and were being mean to each other to make themselves look good. Their words were super hurtful, and you never knew when it was your turn to get the brunt of it. Well, soon enough it was my turn. I didn't do anything to deserve it, but some kids just started picking on me and saying all these hurtful things to me and leaving me out of games at recess. I was pretty upset. Then two friends who noticed I was upset, came over to me, invited me to work with them on a project, and told me how great I was doing. We ended up hanging out at recess. They encouraged me to talk to a teacher about what was happening and to get help. They really encouraged me that day. Thankfully, the teacher stepped in and used her words to fix what was broken and help everyone start to get along again.

When I think about and remember situations like this, it makes me think that how we use our words might be more important than we think. Which makes me wonder about what responsibility has to do with our words.

Like if our words have the power to hurt or to help, how do we make sure we're choosing the best words when it comes to the everyday conversations we have with people in our lives? What does it mean to take responsibility for our words? And how can God help us do that? After all, sometimes it's REALLY hard to choose the right words to say when we're experiencing a difficult situation.

Thankfully, when it comes to needing wisdom to help us figure out these sorts of questions, we have a great place to start: the Bible! Throughout the Bible we can read from people who experienced God and were inspired to write about their experiences so other people could learn from them and apply them in their own relationships with God. And the writers of the Bible have a lot of wisdom to share about taking responsibility for our words. Let's look...

VIDEO: The So and So Show (13:01)

Maybe you don't struggle with lying, but complaining is a problem. Or you are not really a complainer, but you would be a bit embarrassed if we overheard the way you talk with your friends in the hallway at school. Today is an amazing day to make a choice to start using your words more responsibly . . . to build others up and help them with your words rather than tear them down. The hammer is in your hands . . . or should I say in your words!

So instead of complaining, try using words of gratitude for what you do have.

Instead of using unkind words, find something nice to say, or just keep your thoughts to yourself.

Instead of gossiping, choose to encourage people and find out how you can help them.

Instead of using curse words, try to figure out why you feel you need to say them in the first place.

Or instead of lying, well . . . tell the truth, even if it's hard. It's truth that builds trust with the people around you.

Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

Why do your words matter? How have you seen your words' ability to both build and tear down? How can you choose to take responsibility for the way you speak? These are some big questions. If you're not sure how you'd answer them, that's okay, too. You'll have a chance to talk more about them with your Small Groups! Before you head out, let's pray and ask God to help us make wise choices with our words! Let's pray!

SLIDE: Theme Background

Large Group Leader leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.

OFFERING

What mission are we supporting this year? Yes, Morning Star Mission! Morning Star helps people who are struggling financially. They help them with their basic necessities AND they help them with whatever it is they need to do, to be able to get in a better place and support their families. I know it was just Christmas a month ago but look at this video about one of Missions of Hope's programs called Stars of Hope. If you have your offering, bring it up as we watch this...

VIDEO: Stars of Hope

So Merry Christmas...WAY early. But Missions of Hope prepares all year to be able to have gifts at Christmas available for kids in families that need the help. So make sure to go home this week, count all of your blessings, and do what you can do to raise some money for kids in need in our area!