

LIFENEWS

YOU
CINNAMON ROLL!

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I worked in a classroom with 30 four and five years old. As the kids came in each morning, they could have breakfast and were allowed one cup of juice; then they had to have water or milk. One morning, a little boy came in and had his toast and juice, but he wanted more juice. I told him "no" and offered him water or milk. He pushed back in the chair and looked me squarely in the eyes and yelled, "I want juice, you cinnamon roll!!" I have been called much worse, but "cinnamon roll?" As funny as that was, I needed to let him know name-calling wasn't allowed.

One of the verses I memorized as a teenager that has really stuck with me is Ephesians 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth but only what is helpful for building according to their need that it may benefit those who listen." I used to think that as long as I wasn't using swear words or foul language, I was following that command. However, I realized it was so much more than that.

Scripture talks a lot about the tongue and how to use it. James describes it as a "rudder," saying that out of it comes both praise and cursing. In other biblical references, we are told we speak out of what is going on inside of us (See Luke 6:45). Clearly, how we talk is important!

So what is Paul describing in this passage? He begins by saying that Christians should live differently by putting off our old-self and putting on the new-self in Christ. Then he gets specific. In Ephesians 4:24-25, he speaks of being honest in speech and not falsehood with your neighbor.

Lying and deceiving with our words isn't an option. Paul goes further and says in your anger, do not sin. This is hard. I have said hurtful things to and about people when I have been blinded by anger. Yet, Scripture calls me to work through the anger without saying or doing something that causes hurt. This is where we pick up our verse, "Don't let unwholesome talk come out of your mouth but only what is helpful..."

"Only what is helpful for building people" is almost more challenging than not letting unwholesome talk come out. I cannot gossip, use foul language, or slander (see verse 31), but if I am not using my words to build people up, I have fallen short. Am I talking in a way that is encouraging, kind, loving, etc. to all who listen?

How is your tongue doing today? Do you need to get rid of and repent of how you have used it? Has there been gossip, falsehood, bitterness, slander, hatred in your conversation? How about what you have said online about the famous person who will never hear it; that affects your testimony to those around you. How could you build someone up today? How could God use your words to bless someone today?

In the end, our words hold immense power. Let us choose to use them wisely, to uplift, to encourage, and to spread the kindness of Jesus. Let us use them for the kingdom today. And by the way, don't call anyone a "cinnamon roll."