

All the Prayers of God's People
Sept. 22, 2020



Romans 12:1 tells us to "give [our] bodies to God because of all he has done for [us]. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice-the kind he will find acceptable." Giving our bodies to God also includes our tongues-our words and what we say to others. As James 3:5 points out, "The tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire."

Over a year ago I preached a sermon that included the acronym you see at the top of the page. It does not matter if you are in the business world, your homelife, with friends, or if you are having a political conversation. The most effective way to ensure good, quality and open conversation is to use this acronym: THINK. It's scriptural in that we are called to control our tongues, before we speak, to THINK, this post addresses in particular our online presence during this time of quarantine (but really any time). Think stands for the following:

- T - is it True?
- H - is it Helpful?
- I - is it Inspiring?
- N - is it Necessary?
- K - is it Kind?

Is it TRUE: Is what you are about to say or write TRUE? Not just your opinion of what is true, but without a shadow or a doubt true across every nation, every continent, every person, every political standpoint true? Can it be tested in articles? Can it be reproduced in multiple news reports from different venues (and different sides of the aisle)? Is what you are about to say or write true in the sense that it upholds all Christ's values (Love, Mercy, Humility, etc.), that kind of true? Did your blurb or phrase come from a meme or something a "friend" thinks is real and true? If you can honestly say that what you are about to post or say is true across all of these crosschecks, then ask yourself these other things to follow up and check again.

Is it HELPFUL? Is what you are about to say or write helpful to everyone? Does it uplift? Does it hold Christ as the reason you are posting? Does it bring joy and kindness into the world or does it have the potential to hurt feelings? Is it helpful in shedding light onto a particular issue that is backed up with truth (as defined above)? If any of these are answered no, then consider not posting or saying those things. But ask yourself the following to crosscheck yet again.

Is it INSPIRING? Is what you are about to say or write inspiring to others to seek further truth? Does it inspire a new way of thinking (not by force, but by inspiration)? Can you say that the inspiration behind your post also fits the true and helpful categories? If not, please don't post! Refer to the following acronyms as well...

Is it Necessary? Is what you are about to post or say necessary for the good of humankind? This is one that gets tricky, especially during this political time. If your post is necessary because you are raising awareness to a deep-seated issue in the world and it also is true, helpful, inspiring, then consider posting it (after you have also checked the kind portion of the acronym). If it is just "proving a point", then likely it is not necessary. If you have answered that it is true, helpful and inspiring but it is not necessary, then you should not post or say what you are about to say. For instance, it may be true that your daughter is carrying leftover baby weight. It may be helpful to let her know the pants don't fit well and she might should chose a different pair. It may be inspiring to encourage her to exercise with you by taking a walk. But it is unnecessary to tell her that she looks like she's pregnant and really should lose the weight. If what we are thinking or writing will not fit into all of these categories, don't say it and don't post it! And Last but not least, the final crosscheck is below.

Is it KIND? Is what you are about to say or write KIND to everyone who will read it? Will your post make others cringe and are you posting/saying it for shock value sake? Then don't post or say it. If what you are about to let slip is cruel in any way, then it's probably best to find alternative ways of expressing your frustration or anxiety. If what you are thinking is not kind to God's children, then it is best to take the higher road and find a way to express your feelings in a kinder and gentler way. Honey gets more bees, the old adage says! Another way to experience this is to look at your thought/post and evaluate if it would fit only into one side of the conversation. Do your thoughts pit right and wrong, black and

white against each other or appeal only to one side of any argument? If it does, then chances are it is not necessary or kind!

During our time of political turmoil, fears, anxiety and frustration are running rampant. It does not matter which side of the political fence you are on. Scripture encourages us to bide our tongue, to control our words and bodies, and to walk alongside God in all things. If your words do not fulfill Christ's calling for our lives, then perhaps we should turn to our scriptural call to seek God in all things first, evaluating our words against God's expectations. Alternately, if your words will not make a difference, then we are encouraged to find a way to make a difference in our actions instead in the world. An action, as they say, is worth 1,000 words.

Our next article is discussing the other side of this issue, how to respond when there is something that hurts our feelings!

Will you pray with me?

Lord, Almighty. Sometimes we get caught up in thinking our words and ways are the only and right way to follow you. Help us to evaluate our minds and thoughts and look for you in the midst of our broken world and struggles. Help us to offer words of encouragement and to seek faith and trust in you, instead withholding words that will draw others away from your Grace and love. Help us to find useful and productive ways to teach others, to encourage others to find truth, and to be kind in our personal walks with you. Thank you for giving us courage to make a difference, but to do so in a THINK-ing kind of way. It's in your name we pray, Amen.