

“You’ve never had it so good.”

“You turn if you want to. The lady’s not for turning.”

“I counted them all out and I counted them all back.”

Some phrases or sections of speeches are very famous. We know who said them and the context of why they said it.

“We shall go on to the end. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

“That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

None of us here are orators that are household names. I don’t think any of us have written important speeches for famous people to read either. However, the things we say and write do sometimes get remembered by our friends, relatives, work colleagues and even strangers.

I have a fair few memories from my school days and most of them involve times where I was bullied by a contemporary or picked on by a teacher when I was innocent – *honestly* I *was* innocent! It’s easy to remember when you’re made to feel small or made to look stupid in front of others and when you’re a teenager that really matters.

Of course I also remember many occasions in the past where someone said a few lovely choice words about something I was doing. It made me feel a few inches taller and helped me to carry on doing something that I found difficult and I got better at it – like playing the piano or speaking in front of a group of people. Now doing both of these things is pretty easy generally, but years ago I definitely needed people to cheer me on and encourage me. It’s *still* a wonderful thing to receive constructive praise even today though!

God has made us to be honest. Occasionally I might be honest, but also be a little rude in my honesty. That's not helpful. We're all probably learning about being positively honest with people, rather than being honest and demeaning someone at the same time. That only makes *us* look silly and not the other person anyway!

God wants us to be honest with Him. Listening to someone read Psalm 51 makes us remember how it's a good thing to say, "Sorry" to God and then to change our own behaviour or thought patterns. Create in me a pure heart God!

I've read several times about an evil queen who once used a mirror regularly. Maybe you might remember what she said and what the magic mirror replied. "Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the fairest of them all?" "My Queen, you are the fairest."

Actual mirror – looking through, but hard to see. Wipe off with paper towel and water. Can see my own reflection very easily now.

As a Christian I choose to want to reflect God's character and His glory everyday. I want other people to know that I'm a disciple of Jesus not just through what I say, but also in the way I act. I want people to see Jesus in me.

The problem is that sometimes my life gives a tarnished reflection of God to others. Through praying, reading the Bible and meeting regularly with other Christians, so the tarnish comes off and people start to see the way that God created me. Perhaps your life has tarnish in it too. Through praying, reading the bible and meeting regularly with other Christians, so your life will definitely change for the better too.

Choosing our words carefully, James in our first Reading calls it the tongue, is very important. Sometimes when we think of loving others, it might occasionally be actions that are grandiose and extravagant. However, I've found that it is the intentional, consistent, little things that can sometimes be the most meaningful. Little things can make a big difference in someone's life.

God calls us to be loving to others. We can all do that – through our words and our actions. As our lives reflect how great God is, whether through our words or actions, so He is magnified.

The first part of the Westminster Shorter Catechism of 1647 says that “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” As we intentionally desire to glorify God everyday, so our written and spoken language may change. As we desire to glorify God, so it will naturally happen that the people around us will be encouraged too.

This week, lets be intentional in using phrases that people may remember for quite a while. “Thank you, that was very helpful.” “I love you.” “I’m glad you’re my friend.” “I’m sorry, will you forgive me?” “Can I make you a cup of tea or coffee?”

We probably won’t say things that a mass of people will be stirred and encouraged by, but the good use of our tongues will certainly bless those few people that cross our paths this week. Let’s decide to do this and ask God to give us the courage, strength and initiative to use our tongues wisely this coming week. Let God be honoured in our lives this week! Let us all regularly reflect His character to others.

Tell out my soul!