

Theme: Relationships can be strengthened or damaged by words - which are the overflow of the heart - and repairing them requires confession and repentance in word and deed.

I. The Importance of Words

- A. Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me - really????
- B. Words - they can be a blessing, or a curse
- C. Words - they are critical in all relationships
- D. God created and redeemed through the Word
- E. We create, ruin and reconcile relationships via words

II. Spotting Slips of the Tongue

- A. Understanding the power of words

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18

- 1. Unlike American proverb, God says words CAN hurt
- 2. Words have the power to hurt - pierce like sword
- 3. Words have the power to heal - wise bring healing

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Proverbs 18:21

- 1. Tongue has power of life and death, healing and hurt
- 2. Wise person pays attention - and reaps reward
- 3. This means words are important - can hurt and heal relationships

- B. Our words can tear down people - and relationships

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1. Lying and flattery

A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin. Proverbs 26:28

2. Harsh or purposefully hurtful words

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1

3. Quarrelsome words

As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. Proverbs 26:21

4. Gossip

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. Proverbs 16:28

5. Mocking words - sarcasm, upbraiding; dismissive

The proud and arrogant man — “Mocker” is his name; he behaves with overweening pride. Proverbs 21:24

Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended. Proverbs 22:10

C. Summary - speaking negative words of cursing

- 1. All are manifestations of negative, cursing speech
- 2. This is speech meant to tear down, not build up
- 3. Speech meant to inflict harm, rather than healing
- 4. All of these will destroy relationships as fast as virtually any action
- 5. These wounds do not heal quickly!

III. Avoiding Slips of the Tongue

- A. To control our words we must be changed on the inside
The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. **For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.** Luke 6:45
 - 1. Words are the fruit of our inner self - thoughts, desires, attitudes
 - 2. This is why words are so hard to control!
We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check... ⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸ but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. James 3:2, 7–8
 - 3. To avoid bad words - we must let Jesus work on our inner man
 - a. We must pray and ask Jesus to reveal wrong thoughts, attitudes, etc.
 - b. We must SOAK in the Word regularly to let it change us
 - c. We must actively take our inner thoughts captive - not rehearsing negative thoughts and words
 - d. Instead of negative thoughts - pray for the person!
 - 4. Our words are usually determined long before they are spoken!
 - 5. The war for controlling our tongues is won in our daily walks with Jesus
- B. Practice speaking words of blessing to build up

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. Ephesians 4:29

- 1. Not corrupt/rotten speech, but good, ripe speech
 - 2. The goal is to build others up and help
 - 3. Our speech should come from a heart to bless and build up - not tear down the other person
- C. Learn when to speak - and when to hold our tongue
He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. Proverbs 21:23
 - 1. There is a time to speak, and a time to hold our tongue
 - 2. Speaking when we should be silent can lead to calamity
A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. ²⁸ Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue. Proverbs 17:27–28
 - 3. If my inner man is not ready to speak properly - be silent
 - a. This is what the wise do - keep silent
 - b. Letting evil words fly without restraint is the fools way

IV. Regaining Your Foothold After Slips of the Tongue

- A. When my words were the problem

1. Make sure you understand why your words hurt
 2. Use your words to bring healing - by confession
 - a. We must SPECIFICALLY confess - not generalities
 - b. WE confess about our words - not their feelings
 3. Pray and resolve to speak properly in the future
- B. When I was hurt by the words of another person
1. Do NOT respond in kind - control your tongue
 - a. This is our natural response - and it is disastrous
 - b. Do not descend into winner take all verbal battle
 2. Let them know how the words hurt
 - a. Talk to them - not others about them
 - b. Be specific about how the words hurt and why
 - c. Do not go into motives - just what was actually said
 3. Give the person time to reflect and repent
 - a. They may need time and space - give it to them
 - b. We can not manipulate repentance!
 4. Do not continue brooding over the words
 - a. This only makes the wound worse
 - b. Pray for the person to see the truth
 5. If they repent - forgive and move on
 - a. Be willing to overlook wrong words - don't let them dominate

A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult. Proverbs 12:16

- b. We need to forgive - as Christ forgives us
- c. More on this in two weeks

V. Applying the Word

- A. Receive the Gospel of Grace
 1. All fail in this area - do not be condemned by law
 2. Receive the Gospel of grace - we are forgiven
 3. Receive the grace of God - we can be changed here as well!
- B. Prayer for forgiveness, confession, repentance, and renewal

Slip of the Tongue

Proverbs 12:18

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Prayer

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17

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