

4. Speak Right

The Bible speaks a lot about the tongue and the words we speak. So of all the rules this one is a must if you are going to stay on top of things – “speak right”. Luke 6:45 says this, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks”. What is in the heart usually comes out of the mouth at some point in some form of another. In fact, Jesus, in Matthew 15:11 says, “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth.” In verse 18 he says again, “But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.” If you want to know what your heart is like, listen to what you speak. It’s a pretty good indication. I know some folks who say some mean things, and I know some folks who I’ve never heard a mean thing come out of their mouth. It’s the condition of the heart that’s different. They take time to let God mold them to be like Him, and they take time to fill their mind and heart with the things of God.

On our eighth grade trips to South Dakota I teach a number of lessons and one of them is entitled “Your Words Matter”. In it I teach kids to ask themselves three questions before they speak.

- Is it true?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it kind?

If it passes those tests, then you can speak it. Words have the ability to heal or destroy. We’ve seen it a lot these days in bullying, and almost every school now has a bullying policy. It’s easy to tear people down and find fault, because it takes no talent or self-respect. We love talking about others in good ways and bad ways. In fact, I think we like to give information about others because we feel we have power and are in the know.

Proverbs gives a lot of wisdom about the tongue and our words. Proverbs 21:23 says, “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.” Proverbs 12:6 says, “The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright delivers them.” Proverbs 12:18 says, “There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” Proverbs 12:22 says, “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are His delight.” Negative, critical, lying and complaining words can bring about pain and hurt that last a life time. My Grandpa used to say, “For every hurtful word you say to someone you have to say at least 12 kind words to heal the wound.” It’s hard to forget the mean, hurtful words. I knew a young lady who got pregnant in high school; and when she told her dad about it, he called her a whore. He asked for forgiveness, and they became great friends; but she never forgot those words. Grandpa also taught us, once you’ve said it you can’t take it back. Try putting toothpaste back in the tube, once it’s out, you and I can’t put it back in - at least not all of it. James devotes a whole chapter to the tongue. He tells us it’s like a fire. It has the ability to do good and evil. One word can change someone’s day for the good or bad.

Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” Hopeful, kind, encouraging, faith building words bring healing and build the kind of character that honors God. Speaking right is most important. Speak words that uplift, give grace and give God glory. Fill your

heart and mind with the words of God. Pray like David and ask God every day to let the words of your mouth be acceptable in His sight. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly, and let the words you speak agree with the promises of God. David said this about the Word of God in Psalm 119:103, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Speak right. It will help you live right.