

Words Can Hurt or They Can Heal
Digging Deeper
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A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Luke 6:45 NIV

Words matter. What we say and how we say it can break a heart or heal it. And the choice to do one or the other is entirely up to us.

We're going to dig a little deeper into that in just a minute. But before we do, let me say something to the men reading this.

God has given us the responsibility of leadership in our home. He expects us to love and sacrifice ourselves for our wife the way Jesus loved and sacrificed himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25). That means choosing our words carefully, resisting the urge to win every argument, and continually blessing our wife with words of love and affirmation.

It also means rejecting the world's view that a real man is the king of his castle, entitled to say or do whatever he pleases.

To God, a real man is someone who sees and values his wife the same way He does. Many of us, myself included, did not see that modeled in the home we grew up in and have struggled to love and honor our wife with words that bless her, especially in the middle of a dispute. Unless we embrace the call that God has put on our life to see and value her as He does, our marriage will be void of blessings and nothing we read here or discuss in our small group will change us.

Here's something to help with that, before it's too late.

A Real Man, by Billy Dean
<https://youtu.be/1LGsmduf-sE>

Words have the power of life and death, and we need to choose them carefully (Proverbs 18:21). What we say can pour life giving blessings of love and kindness into someones heart, or pierce their heart with curses that darken how they feel about themselves and how they relate to others for years to come.

All of us heard hurtful words from our parents and other people we trusted and depended on when we were young because none of those people were perfect, and many were cursed in the same or a more terrible way (James 3:2). Because of these curses, intentional or not, we now struggle with doubts about who we are and what value, if any, we have to others. We live our adult life as a wounded child, running away from close relationships or lashing out at others with the same hurtful words we once heard when something is said that triggers a painful memory.

These curses don't have to be big to do real damage (James 3:3-4). They can be a tiny spark that erupts into a roaring fire, burning bridges, torching life long relationships, and leaving our life or someone else's a smoldering ruin (James 3:5-6).

And they don't go away on their own. Instead, they become internalized, sometimes to the point that we believe them and begin speaking them into our life. They burden us with anger, shame and guilt and hold our heart in a deadly grip until they are healed by the one and only thing that can break the curse they put on us -

The blessing of God's love.

When we are blessed by someone who speaks God's love into our heart, the wounded child inside us begins to heal, a smile reappears on our face, we are connected to God in a real and meaningful way, and the direction of our life begins to change.

But we cannot tame our tongue on our own. We need the help of the Holy Spirit living in us to do that (James 3:7-8).

The Holy Spirit softens, cleanses and heals our heart. It also renews our mind, making God's thoughts our thoughts and allowing us to **think through** rather than **react to** the spears and arrows that come our way each and every day.

This is what that looks like in real life.

1. In times of stress and anger, we choose to keep the gloves on instead of taking them off and getting into a bare knuckle brawl. We invite the spirit of Jesus to come into the situation and take over the conversation.
2. We say no to the voice in our head imploring us to lash out, and ask God to bring peace to our heart and give us the wisdom we need to choose our words carefully (John 16:33, James 1:5).
3. We stop and **THINK** about whether or not what we'd like to say is **TTrue, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind.**
4. We say no way to that same voice inside us when it tells us lies about ourselves that poison our heart and set our

tongue on fire. We learn to be very careful about what we say to ourselves because we're listening and reacting to every word.

At the end of the day, the choice to speak curses or blessings into someone's life is a reflection of what's in our heart, not on our tongue (Luke 6:45). If there is anger, shame or guilt stored in our heart over something that was said to us years ago, we need to ask God to release it and fill our heart with forgiveness for those who hurt us. And if our heart is filled with gladness over how much God loves us, we need to reach out to someone who is hurting and bless them with His love so they too may experience His blessing.

Because, as Jesus said, blessings are all about paying it forward by loving others the way he loved us (John 15:12 NIV).

Reflect

Words matter. What we say and how we say it can break a heart or heal it. And the choice to do one or the other is entirely up to us.

Pray

Heavenly Father, pour your love into my heart and fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I may heal from the painful

words that have tortured my soul and kept me in darkness for years. Free me from the anger, shame and guilt that have kept me in bondage and help me forgive those who have hurt me so I can walk out the door each and every morning with a passion for blessing others the way you have blessed me.

Amen

Discuss

Blessings are words of love and affirmation. What does it mean to affirm someone with your words?

How often did you hear words of love and affirmation from your parents? How did it affect you? How did it affect your relationships with other people?

Who has spoken a blessing into your life and how has that changed you? Did the blessing heal you from hurtful words or fill the void created by words of love and affirmation you never heard?

Final Thought

Blessings matter. They can make someone's day or lift them out of the depths of depression. A well timed blessing can even save a life. Let's be sure to take a few moments each morning to remind ourselves to bless our family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, pastor, visitors to our church

and people we meet on the street with our words every chance we get. It **will** make a difference. In their life, and in ours.