

## Watch Your Words

Solomon observed, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). The pen is mightier than the sword!

Our words reveal a great deal about us. What comes out of the mouth reveals what is in the heart. If you have listened carefully, you are aware of some serious heart problems. Vulgarity, profanity, lying and racial and sexual slurs seem to be the order of the day.

Hollywood has filled the big screen with foul-mouthed men and women. Television has not done much better. Filthy and profane language floods the work place, the classroom and the schoolyard. Children pick up the filthy talk from the media, from their peers and from their parents. They think it's cool to talk that way. They do not understand that adults, who spew forth a fountain of filth, do so because they lack the intelligence to express themselves in a decent and civil manner. Intelligent men and women do not need to resort to filthy and profane language to get their message across.

**Christianity demands that we watch our words.** The Bible is very clear. Paul admonished: "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). "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Colossians 4:6). "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25). Before we say anything, we should ask ourselves three questions: Are our words kind? Are they pure? Are they true? If we can't say yes to all three questions, then we should be quiet!

**The way we say something is almost as important as what we say.** This is especially true when tempers flare. As Solomon wrote "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

**If we are not careful, our words may come back to haunt us.** Jesus warned "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37). Therefore, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19).

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