

# Be Careful With Your Words

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Being careful with your words needs to become a way of life. It needs to become part of how you think in your moment to moment off the top of your head thinking.

## Why You Should be Careful with Your Words

- The Bible Says We should (Proverbs 13:3, 21:23, 29:20; James 1:26; Psalm 141:3)
- Being careful with your words is part of loving others (Proverbs 27:14, 10:19, 12:18)
- We will be judged for our words (Matthew 12:36-37; Galatians 6:7)
  - And as a steward of the ability to speak, you will give an account to God for **every word you speak** in this life, whether it was uplifting to others or hurtful to them, and whether you thoughtful about how it would affect others or just being careless. Either way, you will give an account to God for it.

## Ways You Should be Careful with Your Words

### Avoid saying things that are hurtful

- I don't mean "don't ever say things that are hurtful." I mean don't say things that are hurtful if it's not needed or beneficial.
- Love seeks to avoid causing pain that isn't in the other person's best interest
- Before you're about to say something ask yourself
  - Will what I'm about to say hurt this person's feelings?
  - If so, do they need to hear this? Will it benefit them? Is it worth it?
  - Could I change the way I plan to word this to still make my point, but without hurting their feelings?

### Avoid saying things that aren't true

- I'm not mainly talking about lying, but lying would be included in what I'm talking about. But I'm mostly trying to get at the problem of *accidentally* saying things that aren't true.
- Casually saying things that aren't true is unloving (Proverbs 26:18-19)
- Before you're about to say something ask yourself
  - Is this really true?
  - Should I communicate this as certain, or as probable, or as possible?
  - Even if the point I'm trying to make is true, is that way I'm wording it potentially untrue?

### Avoid saying things that belittle others

- Proverbs 11:12
- We belittle other when we make comments about put them down
- Neighbor means everyone
  - When Jesus said that the second greatest command is to love your neighbor, a lawyer asked him, "and who is my neighbor" and Jesus responded with the parable of the good Samaritan
- Before you're about to say something ask yourself
  - Does this comment belittle others?
  - If it does, is there a different way I could word it so I can still communicate my point, but without belittling someone else?
  - If I can't, is it really going to be beneficial or worth it for me to say this?

### Avoid saying things that are offensive

- I don't mean "don't ever say things that will offend others." But similar to avoid saying things that are hurtful, we should avoid saying things that offend others if it's not necessary or beneficial.
- Love is not rude (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)
- Before you're about to say something ask yourself
  - Will this offend the people hearing it?
  - If so, do they need to hear this? Will it benefit them? Is it worth it?
  - Could I change the way I plan to word this to still make my point, but without it being offensive?

### Avoid saying things that are malicious

- It's not good to have malice in your heart, but thinking before you speak allows you to detect malice when you do have it, and hold it in check
- Malice is a sin (Ephesians 4:31; 1 Peter 2:1)
- Expressing malice with your words is what cursing actually is according to the Bible
  - Mark 11:12-14, 20-21; Jeremiah 29:21-22
- Before you're about to make a wishful statement, ask yourself
  - Would this really be in the best interest of that person?
  - Should I really be wanting this for that person?
  - Is this malice?
- If it is malice, don't speak it. And after realizing you have malice, repent of it, and change your mind about what you wish for that person.

### Avoid unhelpful complaining

- Not all complaining is wrong
  - Psalm 55:16-19
- Not all complaining is okay
  - Numbers 11:1
  - Philippians 2:14
- Avoid unhelpful complaining
  - There's a number of factors that go into where or not complaining is okay or is wrong, but the simplistic way I can think to put it, if I had to reduce all those factors down to one thing, is avoid complaining in a way that isn't helpful. I think that's the simplest way to think about it.
- Unhelpful complaining is unloving
- Before you're about to complain, ask yourself
  - Is this true?
  - Even if it is true, is it helpful?
  - Is the way I'm about to say it seasoned with grace?
- If you're going to share a complain, and it's true, and it's helpful, and it's seasoned with grace, then fine, go ahead and share your complaint, but otherwise, you probably shouldn't.

### Avoiding saying things in a way that isn't gracious

- Colossians 4:6
  - I don't think Paul is mainly talking about the content of our speech, but the manner of it, or the way we say it (salt is never the main ingredient, it's seasoning)
  - In other words, whatever you have to say to others, encouragement, rebuke, praise, bad news, instruction. whatever, say it in a way that is gracious.
- Before you're about to complain, ask yourself
  - How can I say this in a way that is gracious?