**Kind Words or Crushing Words**

(*adapted from Jim Newheiser*)

**A.** Words are powerful (for good or evil). Prov.18:21 Js. 3:3-6 *Death and life are in the power of the tongue*.

**B.** Non-verbal language also speaks.

**C.** What you say reflects what is in your heart. Mt.12:34f Luke 6:43-46 Jer. 17:9 Ro. 3:13-14 *For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart*.

1. Your words express what you value and desire most. Ja. 4:1-2

2. Speech is perhaps the truest indication whether one is wise or foolish. Prov.15:2,28 10:31,20 16:23 4:23

*The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly... The mouth of the wicked pours out evil things...Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life*

3. Your speech reflects the internal warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. Gal. 5:17,15,19-20,26

4. Unbelievers will be judged by what they say. Mt. 12:36-37

*Every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned*.

**D.** .Don’t use your speech to destroy. Prov.11:9 *With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor*.

Angry speech. Ecc. 7:9 *Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of fools*

1. Anger stems from murderous pride and selfishness. Js. 4:1-2a *What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*

2. Rash verbal outbursts. Prov.29:22 12:18 14:17 15:18 *A hot tempered man abounds in transgression ... There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword...A quick-tempered man acts foolishly... A hot tempered man stirs up strife.*

3. Hateful words can escalate into violent acts.

4. When is anger righteous? Eph. 4:26 Mk. 3:5 Re. 6:16 Ja. 1:20

a. A real sin has taken place.

b. Your concern is for God’s glory and kingdom, not your own.

c. Your anger is expressed righteously. The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Quarrels/strife/arguments. Pr. 18:6 *A fool’s lips bring strife and his mouth calls for blows*.

1. Pride and hatred produce fights. Prov.28:25 13:10 10:12 Js. 4:1 *An arrogant man stirs up strife... Through insolence comes nothing but strife... Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions... Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting with strife.*

2. Don’t be contentious. Prov.26:21 17:19 *Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife... He who loves transgression loves strife*.

**E.** Learn to speak with excellence.

1. Exercise self-control.

a. Think (and listen) before you speak. Prov. 15:28 21:23 18:13,17 Js. 1:19

*The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles ... He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him..The first to plead his case seems just, until another comes and examines him*.

b. Don’t talk too much. 10:19 17:28 *He who restrains his lips is wise.... Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is counted prudent*.

c. Don’t lose your temper. Pr. 29:11 15:18b 12:16 14:29 16:32 19:11 Eph. 4:26 Ex. 34:6 *A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back... A fool’s vexation is known at once... He who is slow to anger has great understanding ...*

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who captures a city...A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger. It is a glory to overlook a transgression*.

d. The cure for anger is grace. Eph. 4:32 Mt. 18:21f

e. Avoid disputes. Pr.17:14 20:3 26:21 15:18 26:17 19:11 25:8 *The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out... Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel...Like one who takes a dog by the ears, is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him*.

2. Use your words to build others up. 16:13 12:25

a. Praise and thanksgiving. Ps. 100:4 111:1 138:1

b. Teaching. 15:7,2 31:26 II Tim. 4:1ff *The lips of the wise spread knowledge*.

c. Wise Counsel. 27:9 *Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man’s counsel is sweet to his friend*.

d. Evangelism. 11:30 *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. And he who is wise wins souls*.

e. Rebuke. 28:23 17:10 24:25 26:4-5 28:23 27:6 Gal. 6:1-2 *A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than one hundred blows into a fool... He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with a tongue... Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy*.

f. Encouragement and affirmation. 12:25,18 16:21 *Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad... The tongue of*

*the wise brings healing... sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness*.

3. Develop excellence in the manner of your speech.

a. Be Gentle and calm. 15:1 25:15 Ro. 12:17-18,21 *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger...By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded and a soft tongue breaks the bone*.

b. Be Timely. 15:23 25:11 27:14 *A man has joy in an apt answer and how delightful is a timely word... Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in the right circumstances... He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be reckoned a curse to him*.

c. Be Kind. 16:21 *Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness*.

d. Be Humble. 1 Th. 1:15-17 Eph. 4:1-3

e. Be Gracious. Eph. 4:29-32 Rom. 12:17-21

f. Be Redemptive. 11:30 Mt. 5:9 Ro. 10:15 2 Co. 5:20

g. Draw others out (and listen!). 20:5 18:13 Js. 1:19 Phil. 2:3-4 *A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out*.

**F.** Concluding applications.

1. Controlling the tongue is a crucial issue in life. Mt. 12:34-37

2. Before your words can be changed, your heart must be transformed. Mt. 12:34f 15:18 Luke 6:45 2 Cor. 5:17-21