



## July 6, 2025

Glenn Garvin

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**BIG IDEA** – Words have power! Why not choose to use them to heal rather than harm.

**Scripture Focus** – Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

**Philippians 2:3-4**

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The old sticks and stones rhyme was meant to toughen us up against bullies—but let's be honest, bones heal way faster than words that burrow into the soul.

Our **me-first culture of self-love, self-care, and “my truth” pitches** self-focus as the pinnacle of the good life. Sure, emotional health matters—but not when it runs contrary to God's will and way.

We come out of the womb self-centered! Maturity means moving **beyond me to see we**—noticing and meeting each other's needs.

How does the Holy Spirit help us choose words that heal, not hurt?

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### **WORDS ARE POWERFUL**

“The right words spoken at the right time can actually change your relationships.” Doug Fields.

**Have you ever thought about modifiers we use when we introduce our children, or a friend to others.** (a modifier is a word that limits or qualifies the word or phrase that follows – it preconditions the listeners mind and puts a false first impression in their head before they experience something or someone for themselves).

**What words do you choose when describing your wife, husband, child or friend?**

**Grumpy vs Happy Baby**

**I don't get it right 100% of the time!**

**It is still a constant battle to reframe my heart which will retool my brain before good words can roll out of my mouth!**

**If we want to have healthy relationships, then...**

**“Healthy relationships use constructive words, and unhealthy relationships use destructive words.” Doug Fields**

**The words we use about others are either writing a love story or a horror story. Doug Fields**

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### **Hurtful words stick and sting!**

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. **Proverbs 12:18 NIV**

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. **Proverbs 18:21 NIV**



### **Two types of hurtful words that are often used in relationships:**

- **Words of unrequested coaching.** Words spoken to change or motivate each other. They are used so subtly, we aren't even

aware of it. Words like, “why don’t you,” or “here’s what you should do,” “if I were you, I would...” They sound helpful, but they have a tone of superiority. We think we are being so helpful, but we are unaware that **those words are received as negative and critical**. Coaches tend to point out what we are doing wrong. Less coaching, more cheering. **Our motto around here is to live, love and coach like Christ. So obviously we want to learn how Jesus disciplined and mentored his closest friends.** There is a link to a great article by Tony Cooke about how Jesus Coached His Team. **Jesus coached his disciples through personal relationships**, teaching, and hands-on experiences. He **modeled behaviors**, provided guidance, and **involved them in ministry activities to help them grow spiritually and prepare them for their future roles.** And remember, Jesus asked 307 questions and only 3 of them he answered.

- **Words of criticism.** Unnecessary verbal attacks that chip away at someone’s worth. **Criticism makes folks feel guilty, small and shamed. It is masked as helpful, but it damages the relationship.** “Here’s what you’re doing wrong,” or “here’s what I don’t like about you.” But what if they **are** wrong or they **are** annoying you? **Don’t criticize! Communicate instead of criticizing.** Criticism invites defensiveness and counter attacks, while communicating opens a discussion. **Use the 5 to 1 ratio – five positive words for every one negative.** We should be thankful – it used to be 7 to 1 ratio!

### What kinds of words improve my relationships?



### Two types of helpful words that improve communication:

- **Words of appreciation.** Expressions of thankfulness for the way our friends and family enhances our life. There is a false assumption that appreciation is already understood – like **the people closest to us already know we appreciate them!** Or we’ve known each other for so long, that we forget that Appreciation must **constantly** be initiated.

- **Words of affirmation. Affirmation is validation**, but affirmation is more nuanced, more **direct words of encouragement**. **When was the last time you affirmed a friend? The more specific the affirmation, deeper longer impact it has on the relationship.** Instead of just “I like you,” it’s “I see how you took that bold step,” or “you seem to have just the right words at just the right time in my life.”

**We can write our relationship script using words of coaching and criticism or words of appreciation and affirmation.**

**Which will you choose to use?**

**Great relationships depend on the condition of our heart towards God and towards others!**

**Jesus said, what comes out of our mouth starts in our heart. Our heart is the source of what we speak.**

**Jesus, correcting the religious leaders reminds them, “You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say.” Matthew 12:34.**

**In the Dig Deeper notes there are 100 Bible verses that connect the content of our heart producing the words from our mouth!**

**“A good heart produces good words!” Doug Fields**

**Proverbs is FILLED with heart and mouth examples.**

**Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Proverbs 4:2 NLT**

**The words of the godly are a life-giving fountain; the words of the wicked conceal violent intentions. Proverbs 10:11.**

**The only way we will change what comes out of our MOUTH is to ask God to help change our HEART!**

## Stuff we may not know!



**Tones and Tudes: It's Not What we Say, it's how we Say It**



**80% of all communication is nonverbal.** Even with the intent to show kindness. Something happens in translating intentions to our face! **What's my tone when things are going wrong?**

**Science explanation: When we hear a negative tone, we feel threatened.** And when we feel threatened, the logical part of our brain parks in the back seat allowing our emotions to take control in the front seat to drive our behaviors.

With emotions behind the wheel of our next decision, we either want to **attack** or **retreat**. Neither option provides a good result in relationships.

Even though brain science is real, **we can't believe that the lack of controlling our tone, because of anger or frustration is just who we are!**

**No matter what's happening in our brain, our tone is still a matter of choice.**

**We know how to control our tone in casual or restrictive relationships** (like with people at our jobs, customer service, or servers at restaurants).

**Oddly, it's not unusual for complete strangers to get your very best tone while your wife, husband or friend gets your worst. Why?**

**Maybe we let our guard down around those closest to us. Maybe we believe it should be safe just to vent and let it all come out!**

I have had most of my worst experiences of outbursts **in the family car while on a family vacation.** Our kids were trapped while I was spewing toxic words all over my wife or one of them. It was wrong, embarrassing and damaging to everyone! I did one thing my parents never would do – admit I was wrong and out of control, embrace my

stupidity, emphasize how much I deeply love them and their mother and ask for forgiveness.



**Those closest to us often experience the worst of us.** But surely if you can **control our tone in interactions with strangers** then we can **choose to offer our family and close friends that same degree of tonal kindness.**



**Most of us want to be cared for and have connections with others.**

We can think about our relationships in a similar way. Our friendships may be hungry or even starving right now. That hunger can present itself through cravings:

**“I’m hungry for affection.”**

**“I’m hungry for conversation.”**

**“I’m hungry for time together.”**

**“I’m hungry for what we once had.”**

These cravings occur because there has been a lack of nourishment in our relationships. As a result, **the relationship drifts toward emptiness.**

**Being a Pastor for my entire adult life I hear this comment constantly:**

**“No one wants to be my friend.” Or “No one pays any attention to me or asks me how I am doing.”**

**To be a friend, to have friends there are rules you know.**



**To have friends, we must show ourselves friendly!**

There's actually a Proverb that even says that!

A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. **Proverbs 18:14 NKJV**

This will feel mean, and sets the bar pretty low, but Proverbs uses a strange Hebrew word for the phrase, “**must show himself friendly.**” The word is [ra'a': To be evil.](#)

**The implication is this – even a wicked, evil person can have friends if they are friendly to others!**



**To maintain friendships there must be regular connections and a genuine interest in each other.**

**With a lack of connection** - You begin to feel distant from one another.

- There is a **deterioration of trust**. Relationships crave an emotional connection and without it over a prolonged period, you become suspicious of one another's motives, and **we lose the ability to allow God's love to “cover” each other's sin.**

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. **1 Peter 4:8 NLT**

- **There is a breakdown of respect:** Without trust, resentment appears, and respect begins to fade, which is key in a healthy relationship.
- **There is an increased focus on issues:** When a craving that connection, we start focusing more on issues than solutions, and more on what divides us rather than unites us. When we begin to lose sight of the bigger picture, blame and criticism quickly follow.

**Relationships require an interests in others.**

- Which is also a Biblical concept!
- Paul defines humility as the ability **to “esteem each other as superior to yourselves.” Instead of fixing your eyes on those points in which you excel, fix them on those in which your neighbor excels you.**

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. **Philippians 2:3-4**

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### So, what did we learn today?

- Words are powerful to HURT or to HEAL.
- A couple words are destructive - Words of unrequested coaching & criticism.
- A couple of words are constructive - Words of appreciation & affirmation.
- The only way to change our words is to allow God to change our heart.
- If we want friends, we have to be a friend.
- All relationships require regular connections.

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### How can we apply what we've learned?

- Let's ask God to search our hearts first.
- Then let's ask God to show us who we may have hurt with our words.
- Now, let's ask God to help us choose words that give life to someone specific today – a specific word of appreciation or affirmation.

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## SCRIPTURES

### **Proverbs 12:18 NIV**

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**Philippians 2:3-4**

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## NOTES

### [Sticks-N-Stones](#)

<https://crossidiomas.com/sticks-and-stones/>

The Sticks-N-Stones children's rhyme was supposed to build resiliency against bullies. Instead, we found that bones heal much faster than hurtful words that burrow into our soul. This whole Look out for #1 – Self Love, Self Care, Self Truth culture has pitched putting oneself first as the pinnacle of the good life. Sure - emotional health is important, but not to the point of being contrary to God's will and God's way! We come out of the womb self consumed! Maturity means that eventually we move past ourselves and begin seeing others needs as well. Relationships require attention to each others needs to grow in intimacy. Let's discover how God's Word helps us choose better words that help and not hurt each other.

### **Getting Honest with Myself – questions to ask myself on how I'm doing.**



#### [Out Of The Heart The Mouth Speaks](#)

100 Verses about our heart connecting with our mouth!



#### [Six Times Jesus Coached His Team](#)

When Jesus spent time with his disciples, he wasn't just making profound statements so they would be enlightened. Rather, he was teaching them such practical things as:

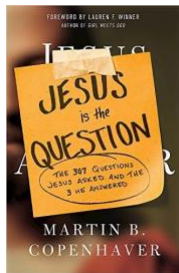
- This is how we do ministry, and this is how we don't do ministry.
- This is how we treat people, and this is how we don't treat people.
- This is how we represent heaven, and this is how we don't represent heaven.

In short, Jesus was training them to have a common mind-set and a shared culture concerning how ministry was to be done. We don't see Jesus focusing on how they put on their sandals or whether or not they had facial hair, but we do see Jesus emphasizing what he considered to be core values in how they did and did not do ministry. Consider these examples in which Jesus is essentially telling his disciples, "We don't do it that way; we do it this way."

- **To Welcome or to Shun**
  - **To Denounce or to Celebrate**
  - **To Save or to Condemn**
  - **To Focus on the Devil or on Heaven**
  - **To Attack or to Yield**
  - **To Serve or Be Served**
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### [The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered](#)



[And a 4-year-old child, on average, asks 437 questions a day!](#)

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