

July 21

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV) ²⁹Do 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. **2 Corinthians 4:13 (KJV)** We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

Discussions were always an important part of my classes, as long as the discussions remained civil and respectful. Before speaking, we need to listen. When studying *Frankenstein* one year, I focused on the advancements in medical care. One study stated that as long as the brain stayed healthy, people could live 150 or more years because of our ability to manufacture and replace body parts. I asked the class if they believed that was a good idea. That led to a very lively discussion as one comment would shift the discussion in another direction. Finally, I asked what made us human? If we could replace every organ, joint, and muscle to keep people “healthy,” would we still be human? That discussion ended when the bell rang.

Paul states that we speak about what we believe. Every day we read or hear people demonstrably stating their beliefs without any hesitation. Unfortunately, those proclamations of what they believe often degenerate into a battle of words meant to tear others down. Paul was aware of this tactic, so he also advises those who believe in Jesus should not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths. This presents us with quite a challenge in our world because of the use of words on all levels to destroy ideas and people who disagree with us. Paul tells us that we are to speak words according to each person’s needs that will benefit them. This does not mean we coddle or sympathize with them. It means that we speak the truth in love. We speak encouraging words to those who are weary. We speak correcting words to those who are missing the mark of Jesus’ truth. We speak comforting words of Jesus to those who are struggling. We offer words that sharpen to those who are losing their edge. The Holy Spirit will guide us to the right, beneficial word. The key to Paul’s advice is that we speak what we believe.