

Introduction: Once upon a time a small town was visited by a priest. As he passed by a hut, a woman came to him and begged him to pray for her critically ill child. Since the priest was new in town, a crowd gathered around him to see if he could do anything.

The woman brought the sick child to him, and he said a prayer over her. Then Someone from the crowd shouted. "Do you really think all your mere words will heal her, when the doctors and their medicine could not?"

The priest looked at him and said, "Shut up you idiot! You don't have a clue about what you are asking.

The man became furious after Hearing those words, his face turned red and became heated.

As he quickly made his way toward the priest to pick a fight, the Priest met him half way and said, "If a simple word, like idiot, has the power to make you instantly get angry at me, could not my words of healing toward the child also have the power to heal?"

This week, the Lord put on my heart to focus on the words that come out of my mouth and meditate on Proverbs 18:21, which says...

21 **Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.**

What the Lord is saying through Solomon here is that our Words Matter. They possess the Power of Death and Life. As we continue to focus on replacing bad habits with good ones in 2022, I want to talk about something we are all guilty of as imperfect humans, how we use words.

Bad Habit #2 We must Stop speaking and receiving Words that are negative, which lead to Death.

1. Words that Lead to Death

- a. **Culturally:** We live in a culture where words can be so negative from the politicians we elect, the News that we watch, the social media we read, the church we attend, and the conversations we have. Keep in mind that our culture is influenced by demonic forces we cannot see. Our culture is more concerned about ratings and likes, laughs at the expense of others, than it is about speaking words of life. You see, speaking words of life is boring to our culture. Unfortunately, this mindset trickles down to people, including you and I.

Yes, even God's people say and receive words from others that are negative and promote death. The fact of the matter is that Words of Death are engrained as a result of our culture.

- b. **Self-Evaluation:** Don't believe me. If I gave you a piece of paper that was divided into two columns labeled "Things I like about myself, and Things I don't like, which column would have the most words. Those that lead to life or those that are negative and promote death? I think we all know the answer.

Your Words that Lead to Death column may state, I don't like the way I look. I don't like my body. I don't like my job or income. I don't like that I'm too sensitive or that I am quiet or shy. I don't like that I find it hard to have conversations with others. I don't like that I am not smarter. That I'm not more successful in life.

I don't like that I don't have more joy. More Peace. More patience. More kindness, More goodness. More Gentleness. More Faith. More self-control. Humanly speaking we are more consumed with negative thoughts about ourselves.

c. How we Use Word with Others.

- We are critical of Others
- We like to use words to get a good laugh at others expense
- We can be gossipers or even worse, slanders of others.
- We can use words to lie to people
- We can yell to hurt others out of frustration
- The fact is that our words of negativity have the power to scar people for the rest of their lives.
- The tongue can kill—literally. I heard about a woman in Los Angeles who took her own life. All she wrote in her suicide note was this: “They said.”

d. We can Use Words of doubt and disbelief when it comes to God.

- **The twelve Spies: Numbers 13-14:** “They are too strong for us.” “Their Cities are too fortified.” “We cannot overtake them.” “They are Giants in the Land.” “We are but Grasshoppers”
- **I don't believe God hears my prayers.**
- **I don't think God can or will heal that person.** That is NOT how he operates today.

Prayer of Confession: “Lord I confess to you I have not thought more about the words I receive or say. I confess I have wasted many words in unproductive, even unwholesome talk.

I confess that I have allowed words from others and myself to define me. To hold me captive. To paralyze me. I confess instead of rejecting negative words, I have received them.

I confess that I have not used my words to thank you enough. Instead, I have used words to criticize myself, others, and even you.

Lord, I confess, and I repent. I promise from this day forward I will choose my words to bring life. I pray you will remind me, even convict me, through your Holy Spirit to use my words wisely. Amen.

2. Words that Lead to Life

a. In the Beginning, God created the World, which was once filled with darkness and Disorder.

- How did He create it? He used Words that Brought Life
- The fact that we speak at all is an obvious sign that God made us. God uses words. Animals do not. That's one important aspect about what it means to be made in God's image.

- God has given humankind dominion to steward and govern the world and bring to it, order. One important method for accomplishing this is to use words.
- Our words matter—in conversations and emails and texts and blogs and phone calls and all the rest. Much of the strife in our families and offices and dorms and churches and nations is because of foolish words. But we often underestimate the importance of our words.

b. Notable Scriptures

- **James 3:1-12** - The tongue is a fire that can set a forest ablaze...
- **Ephesians 4:29** - Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.
- **Matthew 12:35** – On the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak” (Matthew 12:36).

c. Our Faith is Connected to our Words

▪ **Matthew 9:20 -22**

And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, 21 for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.”

22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well.

- Focus on her words. Often, we speak words of healing like we are unsure and seem safe. This woman who had no success ever, confidently asserts with her words that ““If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.”

▪ **Numbers 13:14**

6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel,

“The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.

9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.”

d. Words that lead to Emotional and Physical Healing

- If You have Offended Someone with Your Words. Three Simple but Powerful Words that bring healing: “I am sorry.” Time does *not* heal all wounds. Ignoring hurtful statements, we created with our words does *not* make them go away. But wise words can and do bring healing. It starts with “I am Sorry.”
- If You have been Offended from the words of Others, you must learn how to NOT receive words spoken negatively against you, and you must replace them with words of Life. You

must replace death with life. The devil uses people and situations to kill steal and destroy. He takes no prisoners and is the father of lies. Of Satan, Jesus taught, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

- This Includes Negative Doctor Reports. You can acknowledge them, yet NOT receive them. You can use words of life by praying and speaking words of life to your disease or condition. Believe like the hemorrhaging woman, that Jesus will heal.
- **Testimony:** Vijini is my sister-in-law who has a miracle child that had a hole in his heart and was supposed to die. With no other option, she did not receive the doctor's diagnosis and spoke words of life into his heart. When the time for surgery arrived, the doctors at the Mayo Clinic concluded there is no need for surgery, the baby's heart has healed.

How to Speak Words of Life

- Don't say negative things about yourself. Don't accept generational curses, use words to make new ones.
- Praise strategies. Praise God in the morning when you wake up. Retrain the way you think and speak right words. The Holy Spirit can remind and convict. This is the day the Lord has made. I will Rejoice
- Read the Bible and focus on God's promises, while speaking promises of healing.
- Pray for people who receive negative medical reports. Speak life and healing with body parts.

Closing Prayer: Lord, Help Me to Speak Words of Life. Help me to Understand that words are important and have the power to create and destroy. Holy Spirit help me to be quick to speak and slow to listen. Help me to let in words of life, but not to receive words of death. Help me use my words to glorify and praise you. Help me to use words to share my faith. Help me to use words to speak life into everyone I encounter. Help me to forgive those who wronged me, and who I consider enemies. Help me to pray for them and speak words of life to them.

Help me to understand that my words have power, and that the ability speak is a direct result that I am made in the image of God.

Creatures of Habit Sermon Notes and Youth Questions

Bad Habit #2: Speaking Words of Death

Key Verse: Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruits.

SPEAKING WORDS OF DEATH

1. The Old Adage States, "Sticks and Stones can Break My Bones, but Words will Never Hurt Me." Have You Found this to be True? Why or Why Not?
2. Words that Bring Death are Negative and Critical in Nature. What are some ways in our culture, political arena, social media, and relationships this takes place?
3. How does lying, gossip, being critical of others damage our relationships? How can it damage the way you view yourself?
4. What is easier to do. Come up with fifty things you like about yourself or fifty you do Not? Why is that?
5. Something that happens to students and employees at the workplace is that people often talk about others in a negative way. The easy thing to do is be passive or laugh or participate in the conversation. What is the right and hard thing to do?
6. What do You think of this statement? if you have something good to say, say it behind my back. If you have something bad, say it to my face.
7. There was a woman in Los Angeles who committed suicide. The note she left contained two words. "They Said." How does this relate to what we have been discussing?
8. Discuss: Jesus once said, "On the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matthew 12:36).

SPEAKING WORDS OF LIFE

1. How Did God use Words when He created the world? What did they Produce? Note. It is the Opposite of Death. Browse Genesis 1:3-30
2. Part of Being Made in the Image of God is that We can Also Use Words. Animals Can't. Why is that Important?
3. Ephesians 4:29. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Do you ever struggle with applying this verse in your life? Why or why not.

4. Words and Physical and emotional Healing.

Matthew 9:20 -22

And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, 21 for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I will be made well."

22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.

Read Carefully what the woman said to herself. How did the words she said to herself demonstrate a sure confidence she had when it came to being healed?

5. Part of flourishing in life is being able to reject words of death from others and being able to replace them with words of life. How does this apply if you or someone you know receives a discouraging or fatal doctors report?
6. How can you speak words of life to yourself and to tough situations you are going through? In the same scenario, how do people tend to speak negative words of death?
7. What are some words of death you have believed about yourself and what must you do to move forward in life?
8. Take some time to ask God to help you to choose your words wisely. Ask Him to help convict you if you talk negatively to others. This is so important because we live in a culture that uses words negatively. For you to thrive and impact the lives of others, you must learn to be yourself while speaking words of life.