

When Corrupt Talk Comes Out of Your Mouth

It is impossible for me to begin 2014 without giving you a tool for making your year terrific. This is my motto for the year ... again! And I hope it becomes yours also. I did not search my archives before writing, but I am sure that I have written on this before.

“Let no **corrupting talk (unwholesome words)** come out of your mouth ...” You probably can finish the verse. It is found in the book of Ephesians 4:29. It is worth it to read the rest of the verse also.

This is a subtraction and addition equation. What is Paul teaching us about how we communicate with others? Let me put it in first person. Paul is telling me that I must be intentional to remove from my method of communication all words and phrases, sentences and paragraphs that reduce the quantitative value of another person. Whether they are present or not present. This is a discipline that I must take responsibility for.

It is impossible to live in the **power of love** and **speak words** that cause others to feel that something has been taken from them—confidence, motivation, trust. When we speak to others or about others in an unbecoming way, we remove the presence of grace from our attitudes. Without grace in relationships, we become a judge. This elevates our own self-opinion and prevents others from living up to our expectations. Wow! This is a trap. All traps isolate. The result of this kind of living will cause me to isolate myself and believe it is OK.

Subtract. It all starts with Subtraction. Subtract **words** that hurt others. Remove them from your vocabulary. If you try to add edifying words on top of hurtful words, it is like trying

to purify polluted water by adding pure water. It doesn't work. However, if you remove all pollution from the water and the vessel, then add pure water, the water remains pure. This is the principle that Paul is teaching.

Add. When you remove **hurtful words** that are not helpful to others, your **communication** slate becomes clean. Try this for a few weeks. Then begin adding uplifting words—words that enlarge confidence and build self-esteem. **Words** that are filled with favor that they may not yet deserve—that's what grace is.

This is an equation to release the Holy Spirit in our lives. He will not be grieved (withdrawn) by my unbecoming behavior.

Yes, this is step number one to living your life in love. There is no greater way to live. After all, that's what Christ is all about.

Now that I choose to be intentional with my words, my slip-ups are far and few between. I hope yours will be too. Have a love-filled year as you build up others, making life easier for them.

"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth, but such as is good for building up as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:29-32).

Devi Titus, wife of Larry Titus, is among America's most recognized Christian conference speakers and authors. She is an award-winning communicator with the Washington Press Women's Association and speaks to multiple thousands annually, both nationally and globally.