

Take This 40-Day Challenge and Sensitize Yourself to Negative Words

Oh, to take back some of the sarcastic, judgmental words I have said in the past! Maybe you can relate. But it simply isn't that easy. If we have slandered someone, repeated gossip, judged someone or made cutting, sarcastic comments, we need to recognize those words for what they are: sin that requires repentance and the seeking of forgiveness.

The Lord forgives; others may not. Reconciliation takes two people. Our gossip and judgments may do serious harm to someone and their reputation. Even if they forgive us, the residue of the damage remains. That damage will take a long time to fade away or be made right. Negative words—especially criticism, judgment and gossip—also cause collateral damage. When others hear these damaging words, they're influenced in a negative way. They're also hurt by our negative words about their friends and loved ones. Negative words travel far and fast.

Sarcasm, complaining and negative words have been a deep part of my life at times. I have been very sarcastic and critical during different seasons. As I became sensitized to my words during a word fast, I more quickly recognized and repented of my sinful words when they came out. For instance, one time on my way to church I made a very sarcastic comment to my wife.

Later in the day I brought it up and asked her to forgive me. She remarked, "I didn't notice it. It's such a natural part of your life and conversations." I told her right there and then, "The Lord is working in my life, and this is going to change."

Does it need to change in your life too?

Notice the word *reckless*. Words are so powerful and yet used recklessly by so many. Our caustic words can resemble a person carrying around a razor-sharp, double-edged sword thrust in the air, cutting people indiscriminately.

Contrast this wholesale wounding of others to the tongue of a wise person described in the half of Proverbs 12:18: "... but the tongue of the wise is health." What do those healing words look like? They are gentle, encouraging, full of appropriate praise and gracious. They are spoken in due season, at just the right moment.

My personal experience is that the further we go into this forty-day word fast, the more sensitive we become toward negative words—in particular those coming out of our own mouths.

Let me encourage you to pray that the Lord give you the strength and wisdom to seek forgiveness from those you harm with your words and to forgive those who harm you with theirs.

✖ *Adapted from The 40 Day Word-Fast—A Spiritual Journey to Eliminate Toxic Words from Your Life by Tim Cameron, copyright 2015, published by Charisma House. This book focuses on several biblically sound mechanisms to help you change your words and change your life. Not only will your heart be altered, but your heart will be transformed in just forty days. To order your copy [click here](#).*

Prayer Power for the Week of July 31, 2016

This week ask the Lord to help you exercise the language of His kingdom and not that of this world. Thank Him that when you begin to speak this language you will find the doors of the kingdom opened to you in the here and now, and your speech will be full of grace, peace and restoration, and will draw people into unity with Christ. Pray that the glory of God would cover the Earth and that every nation would know Him. Ask the Lord to send more laborers into His harvest field, and

seek opportunities to share the gospel with those who desperately need it (Prov. 12:18).