

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

November 6th

Daily Devotional #37

We Are in the Season of DEDICATION

As We Ask, “What Is GOD Preparing Us/for Us to Do?”

Today’s Daily Devotional (we’re already at Day 37!) is a “guest article” from FaithGateway.com and their “Devotionals Daily” service. I think the author’s consideration of the power of words – everyday words – goes hand-in-hand with our Season of Dedication. Big things (like prayer, transformation, gratitude), little things (everyday words and actions) and everything in between are important to GOD and His Kingdom. Read the following article (excerpted from the author’s new book) and think about how GOD can use you to bless others through the words you speak as you dedicate your words to Him and His honor... Danny

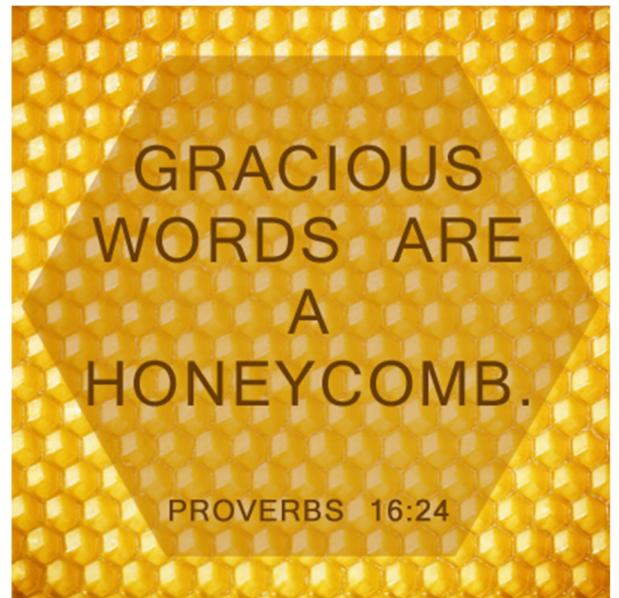
The Power of Words

by Craig Groeschel, excerpted from [*Soul Detox: Clean Living in a Contaminated World*](#), copyright Zondervan.

You don’t have to have a big nose to have heard the childhood mantra, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Just because it’s spouted by first graders doesn’t mean it’s true. Perhaps the adult translation of this age-old adage is more like, “Sticks and stones can bruise your body for a few days, but words can scar your soul for life.”

Like a neutron bomb which annihilates human life but leaves buildings intact, **words can devastate**. Your body may remain unharmed, but your heart suffers the deadly shrapnel of painful phrases. David, who knew a thing or two about having enemies in high places, wrote that evildoers “*sharpen their tongues like swords and aim cruel words like deadly arrows*” (Psalm 64:3). Whether you’re eighteen or eighty, you can probably recall the pain of someone’s harsh words scalding your soul.

Maybe you still hear the message from years ago, playing an endless loop in your mind, echoing inside you every day.



“You’ll never amount to anything.”
“I wish I never had you.”
“You’re nothing like your brother.”
“I’m sick of you.”
“I never loved you.”
“You’ll never change.”

As devastating as these words can be, they can be offset by words of truth, hope, and love.

The right words at the right time can be helpful, healing, and life-transforming.

Proverbs 18:21 says, “*The tongue has the power of life and death.*” What you say can give life to you and to other people, or it can take life away.

Words are powerful beyond imagination. Think about it. When God created the world, how did he do it? ***He spoke.*** God said, “Let there be...” and there was. Words have power. In so many fairy tales, legends, and myths, it’s the power of a spoken spell, incantation, or magic phrase that can either cause destruction or restore harmony.

The potency of godly words can revive, heal, and change our lives. Ungodly words have the power to bind, imprison, and destroy.

- *Creative words create.* Destructive words destroy.
- *Hurtful words crush.* Helpful words build up.
- *Toxic words poison.* Soothing words heal.
- *Faith-filled words bring life.* Faithless words bring death.

Several passages in the Bible clearly contrast the difference.

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

What are reckless words? They’re the shards of glass you hurl in the heat of an argument. They’re the words you know you’ll regret as soon as they’ve left your tongue. They’re the bitter, painful, cancerous messages that leave people sick and hurting. Talking out of the other side of your mouth, the tongue of the wise brings encouragement, joy, and wisdom. Proverbs 15:4 expresses this duality another way:

“The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.” Positive words plant seeds for beautiful trees. Deceptive words poison others like weed killer.

If you are like most people, you can recall several of the many toxic phrases that have been directed at you. They could have been innocent: “Did you mean to do that to your hair?” “Why aren’t you married yet?” “I thought you would do much better than that.”

Or perhaps the words were intended to pierce your heart like a poison dagger: “Why can’t you do anything right?” “I wish I’d never married you.” “You’re a real piece of work.” “You are the biggest disappointment to me.”

My hope is that you can also remember life-giving words spoken to you at the precise moment you needed them.

Maybe someone told you, “I believe in you,” and it was all you needed to move forward. It could’ve been someone saying, “I’m so proud of you,” and their affirmation touched your soul. Maybe a close friend shared, “I’m more thankful for you than you could ever know,” and in return, those words meant more to you than your friend would ever know. The words spoken by a loving spouse can often communicate, “I’d marry you all over again,” reminding you of their support.

Another proverb compares such words to honey and to medicine: *“Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones”* (Proverbs 16:24). I’m thankful for the people in my life who fed me sweet words of affirmation and encouragement.

Amy’s words have often kept me going. When I’m down and feeling inadequate for the ministry before me, she reminds me who I am and what I have in Christ. When others criticize our style of ministry, she reminds me that God called us to do a different work. And sometimes, she simply calls me her Mega-man! I may be an average guy, but I like knowing that I’m her superhero.

We obviously can’t control what others say about us, but we can control what we believe. Since toxic words can destroy our souls, we’ve got to passionately guard our hearts against them. Do whatever it takes to keep the poison out of your heart.

Solomon told his son, *“Listen closely to **my words**... Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life”* (Proverbs 4:20, Proverbs 4:23, emphasis mine). With his life-giving words, a protective father warned his son to guard his heart as his life source. **We must keep others from dumping their toxic waste into our water supply.**

Countless times a day, when it comes to what you hear and say, you have choices to make. When you hear the words of others, you can choose to receive them as truth or reject them as lies. And every time you open your mouth to utter a word, you have the opportunity to speak life or the temptation to take it. Think back through the past few days. When you spoke to others, what did they hear? Either you aimed sharp, poison-tipped darts at their hearts, or you injected them with life-giving, God-honoring booster shots.

(In this Season of Dedication, let's dedicate ourselves to controlling our tongue and using it for good... for GOD and His Kingdom purposes. Dedication in "the everyday things brings transformation for Kingdom Living to us, and honor to our Great, Deserving GOD!)