

Building Communication Skills

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of building communication skills through meaningful conversations and active listening in a Christian context.

Duration: 41:42

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:4, Ephesians 4:28-30, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 4:6

Topics: "Communication"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of speaking the truth in love, as taught in Ephesians 4:15. He highlights the balanced approach of Jesus, who spoke the truth with gracious words. The speaker encourages believers to make spiritual applications from the Word of God and to avoid trivial conversations. He also shares an illustration of a conversation that lacked substance, emphasizing the need to focus on meaningful topics. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of building communication skills rooted in truth and love.

Transcript

Being the last being, I'm sure we all want to express our thanks to all of those who've had such a vital part in the hard work connected with the conference. The trouble in giving thanks like this is that many of the folks are still out there in the kitchen working, but please convey our deep gratitude to all who have toiled so selflessly. The words come to me, God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister.

And I'm sure I speak for all who've enjoyed this conference and the lovely meals and the gracious hospitality and all that has gone in to make it the conference that it is. Now interestingly enough, both Brother Bramhall and I are going to be speaking about tongues this afternoon, but I'll be speaking about the English tongue, and he'll be speaking about what the authorized version calls unknown tongues. I think tongues is the keynote of this afternoon's meeting.

We've had the English tongue and the Korean tongue and the Japanese tongue already. And what I'd like to speak about is our conversation, or you might call it building communication skills. Some people are excellent conversationalists.

Some of the rest of us aren't. I'm really speaking to myself this afternoon, but you can listen. Oftentimes you can tell when a man speaks what one of the great needs in his own life might be.

So shall we turn to Ephesians chapter 4? I'd just like to read a few verses and one in particular. Ephesians chapter 4, beginning with verse 25. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, and the margin of my Bible says here, to the use of edifying as the need may be.

Maybe if you have another version of the Bible it says something like that. As the need may be, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

That all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, it really should be God in Christ, has forgiven you. Not so much God for Christ's sake, but God in Christ.

When you say God for Christ's sake, it almost sounds as if God is unwilling, but that the Lord Jesus comes and pleads with him and therefore he's willing. But it doesn't mean that. It means even as God in Christ, in the work, through the work and person of the Lord Jesus, has forgiven you.

Now the verse I'm particularly interested in is verse 29. As you might have guessed, let no corrupt communication. Somewhere I read that that word corrupt could be translated worthless.

And that's the thought that I have particularly in mind this afternoon. Let no worthless communication proceed out of your mouth. But that which is good to the use of edifying as the need may be, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Building communication skills. How do we do it? Do we ever think about the conversations that we engage in? Do we ever plan them under the spirit of God? When you meet somebody, where do you go from there? Well, I would like to suggest step number one. Step number one.

Take the initiative in asking meaningful questions. Take the initiative in asking meaningful questions by which you try to draw people out. I'm sure you've noticed in the Gospels that the Lord Jesus was always doing this, wasn't he? The questions of the Lord Jesus are a study in themselves.

He never asked a question because he didn't know the answer. He asked so that we, the apostles, and then we ourselves would get to know the answers as well. For instance, he said, Whom do men say that I am? That was a good question, wasn't it? Whom do men say that I am? He had come to the watershed of his teaching ministry here on earth.

This is the experience in Caesarea Philippi. He wanted the disciples to know in their hearts who he was, because if they knew who he was, then they'd be able to face the cross and the tomb and all that lay ahead because they know they were on the winning side. So he said to them, Whom do men say that I am? On another occasion, he said to the Jews, What think ye of Christ? Meaning, what do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he? The idea is when the Messiah comes to the earth, who will he be? From whom will he be descended? And of course, that was easy.

They knew he would be the son of David. Everybody admitted that. But the Lord Jesus had further questions to ask them.

He was not only David's son. He was David's Lord, and he wanted to impress that deeply on their hearts so they would never forget it. On another time, he asked a rhetorical question.

He said, Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? They didn't have to answer that one. That's just a question that hangs there in mid-air for men of all times to contemplate. Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? Well, now, we can take a leaf from the book, a page from the book of the Lord Jesus, and we can use this method in building communication skills.

We can learn to ask intelligent, leading questions that will draw people out. You say, well, give me, for instance. Well, you meet a person, and you can say, I don't think I ever heard about your conversion.

I'd be interested to hear about your conversion. Hopefully, the person's a Christian. You know, that's a wonderful thing.

No two conversions are alike. There are features in common with all conversions. But I'll tell you, it's a thrilling thing to hear of God's dealings in grace in the lives of men and women.

Isn't it? Thrilling thing. I believe that will be part of heaven. I believe that will be part of what heaven will be, an unfolding of the riches of his grace, his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus, and the wonderful weaving of God's plan.

Well, you can start down here, and you can ask a person, I'd be interested to hear how you were saved. I had the joy of meeting a man this morning. He's probably here.

Saved one month. I'm sorry I didn't have time to hear more about it. Another question you can ask, and I find it very helpful.

If you're talking to a Christian, have you had any thrilling answer to prayer lately? That's perhaps a little better than saying, when is the last time you had an answer to prayer? I mean, that puts them on the spot a little. But maybe if you just word it with velvet gloves, you'd say, have you had any thrilling answers to prayer lately? Well, actually, they are going on all the time, and I do feel that we make a mistake in our prayer meetings that we don't allow time, some way or other, for Christians to share the way God has been answering prayers in their life. You know, here's a man, and he's in business, and he's lost his briefcase during the week.

And they search high and low for the briefcase, and it has important papers in it, and they can't find it anywhere. And he goes to prayer, and he gets his friends to pray with him, his Christian friends. And in a marvelous way, God leads him to the briefcase.

Well, I'd like to hear about that on Wednesday night, wouldn't you? To know that God is still in the business of answering prayer. And we live in a world of miracles. I believe in miracles.

I really do. They're going on all the time. And when I say that, I mean things that wouldn't happen according to the laws of chance or probability.

And they do happen. And I tell you, I don't want to get away from that in my life. I don't want to just succumb to the chill of my environment and fail to rise above flesh and blood.

I want to see my life crackle with the supernatural. I want to see it radioactive with the Holy Spirit. And I love to hear the testimony from Christian people of what God is doing in their lives as well.

Have you had any thrilling answers to prayer lately? Tell me about it after the meeting. Another good question, I think, when you meet your Christian friends, you can ask them this. You can say, Have you read any good edifying books lately? You know, some of the great blessings that have come into my life have come through the reading of books, and usually books that somebody has mentioned to me.

Years ago, I got down on my knees, and I asked the Lord to be Lord of my bookshelf, Lord of my library. I said it like this, Lord, you know that in my lifetime, I'm only going to be able to read a certain number of books. And I don't want to read fraud.

I don't want to read trivia. I want to read books that will be meaningful, that will change the direction of my life. Well, you know, God hears prayers like that.

He really does. If we're really simple in our faith with Him and mean business with Him, He hears. And somebody comes along and says, Hey, brother, I was reading this book lately, and it really has been a blessing to me.

And I read it, and it's a blessing to me, too. Have you read the book Knowing God by J.I. Packer? Well, it's splendid. I'll tell you, if you can write a doctrine book, a book on Christian doctrine, so that it stirs up the hearts of God's people to go out and worship to Him, I think that's great.

Knowing God by J.I. Packer. Have you read Born Again by Colson? It's a splendid book, really. Splendid book.

Wonderful story of the conversion of that man. Well, you can do this. You ask people these questions.

You say, yeah, but supposing you're talking to an unsaved person, what do you say? I have to chuckle every time I think of dear brother Paul Little. He used to say to people when he'd meet them and didn't know whether they were Christians, Would you say you're a Christian or on your way to becoming one? Well, I don't know, but the ice is broken, you know, and you can go on from there. It was my privilege in earlier days to fellowship quite a bit with dear Dr. Ironside, H.A. Ironside.

I was working in a bookstore out in Oakland, and he was president of it, living in Chicago. And he used to come west from time to time. It was my privilege to drive him around and be with him.

And he was like that. He was always asking me questions as if I knew anything about the Bible. That was the beautiful part about it, you know.

And I remember one day we were driving over the Bay Bridge, and I was driving and he was sitting there, and he said to me, Bill, he said, did you ever think about that verse in 1 Corinthians? What do you think that verse means anyway in 1 Corinthians 6? And he quoted it from memory. He said, verse 4 it is, if you'd like to see it, the King James. Don't look in another version, because it gives the answer away.

It says in verse 4 of 1 Corinthians 6, it says, if then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. Set them to judge. This is about Christians going to law one against another.

Now, he said, isn't that a funny thing? He said, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. He said, is that what you do? Well, of course, he let me sit there for a while in complete and utter ignorance. I never knew there was a problem there.

And then he said to me, do you think it might mean this? Do you think it might be a question? When you have these problems coming up among Christians, do you set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church? And that is the men of the world, the ungodly judges of this world. Is that the people you take your problems to? People who are of no standing in the church at all? Well, I think if you have the New American Standard Bible or some of the other bibles, it makes it a question. That's why I say it solves the problem.

But I didn't have it then, see? But I'll always thank God for Dr. Einstein. He was always doing that with me. He was always asking me questions about the Word, graciously, you know.

And after I'd think about it for a while, and of course I didn't know the answer, he knew I didn't know the answer, but he wanted me to know it. And then he would tell me. And it's interesting, I think I could take it to the place on the bridge where that went on.

You know what I mean? It's so vivid in my mind today. What was it? Oh, I think it was a spirit-guided conversation, don't you? The man knew something about building communication skills. And he was there to help a young believer in his onward journey.

Brother Davey, just before, we're down there singing at Maybe Yet More, and he leaned across to me and he said, what place did music have in New Testament evangelism? Well, I never thought of it before. But I will. And that's the very thing.

He gave an object lesson of exactly what I was going to talk about in just a few minutes. Now, I don't think this will come to you and me overnight. I think it's something we have to develop, don't you? But what better way among Christian people than when we come together to talk, to talk about the things of the Lord, to talk about the Word of God, to share blessings that we've received, and to ask questions that might bring up these things in the minds of others.

That's the first step. Then take the initiative in asking meaningful questions. Number two, be a good listener showing a sincere interest in what the other person is saying.

That's good. Be a good listener showing a sincere interest in what the other person is saying. It's so easy for us in a conversation to listen with one ear, waiting for the person to come up for air, and then dive in with both feet.

But Paul says in Philippians 2, verse 3, In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. And so it's a good thing to be a good listener. There's a brother in Chicago, I won't mention his name, very dear brother, and when he meets you and you start talking, he hangs on your words and you get the definite impression that that's the greatest thing that's happened to him all day, meeting you.

And you know, everybody loves him. Everybody loves him. It's a nice thing, a nice virtue that he's sincerely interested in people.

He's interested in what you have to say. He's really a people man. And as I say, everybody loves him.

A good listener is not only popular, but after a while he gets to learn something too. Everything you and I know today we've learned. We don't have anything we didn't receive.

Isn't that right? I often say, I don't think I've ever had an original thought in my life. I thought I did once. And then I read Ironside on Ephesians 1 and he had it there years ago.

He really did. I probably got it from there too and didn't realize it. A good listener looks at the person who's speaking instead of letting his gaze wander all around the room while the person is speaking.

A good listener doesn't interrupt with every random thought that comes into his mind. He doesn't sigh or yawn as if he needed some nightfall. And he responds with smiles and nods of agreement whenever they're in order.

It's good to be a good listener, isn't it? It's good to be a good listener. This is part of developing good communication skills. Then the third thing I would like to suggest this afternoon is always seek to edify.

You notice that in the verse that we read. Always seek to edify. It says, let no worthless communication proceed out of your mouth but rather that which is good to the use of edifying as the need may be that it may minister grace unto the earth.

When I talk with you and you talk with me we should have a mutual desire to build one another up in the most holy faith. And incidentally in that connection we should try to be a thermostat instead of a thermometer. A thermometer reflects the temperature around.

A thermostat determines the temperature. And when you talk you can determine the temperature of the conversation. Can't you? Very, very important.

In speaking to people it's good to find out their interests and seek to build on that basis. Try to make spiritual applications. Some people have a real gift in this.

A subject comes up and immediately they see a spiritual application. I think Dr. Barnhouse was a master at that. I don't think there was anything in creation that he couldn't see some spiritual application for.

And that's a great thing. I may have told you told some of you that one time I was standing with dear Fred Elliott out in La Grange, Illinois. He was visiting back there and we were standing outside the chapel.

It was right near the Burlington Tract. And we were standing there talking about the things of the Lord after the meeting. And as we were talking our conversation was drowned out by the Burlington Zephyr going by.

You know, these two huge diesel engines just went vroom right through the village there. You know. And after the noise was down Brother Fred tapped me on the shoulder and he said power, brother but nothing like the power that raised him from the dead.

You see, I saw the Burlington Zephyr. He saw the resurrection of Christ. Good to be like that, isn't it? Good to be able to make spiritual applications from these things that come up in life.

And in that connection I think we all feel lifted but we need to be reminded of it that in our speech and in our conversation we should really make a determined effort to avoid trivia. It's so easy when we get together and talk to spend the time over things that really aren't that important. Right? In fact, I brought along a little illustration of it this afternoon and I'd just like to play it to you and I don't feel embarrassed

because there isn't any of you here but it might ring bells if this tape recorder will work.

Most tape recorders are demon possessed. I hope this one isn't. Okay, let's listen carefully and I hope it will come over with sufficient volume.

It's such a shame that you weren't here for Sally's wedding. Let me go back. That was my fault not the tape recorder.

Larry, did you have a good vacation? It was such a shame that you weren't here for Sally's wedding. Did you hear about it? It was really something. You would have loved the men's outfits.

They wore that latest style for weddings. Purple tuxedos. Isn't that fantastic? And you should have seen the shirts they wore.

They were avocados green with ochre colored ruffles down the front. Ochre? Well, you and I might call it muddy orange but you know Sally. She always says things just right.

The ochre was to please the groom's mother because that was the color of her dress. Oh, and their shoes? Mary, have you ever seen avocado colored lizard skin shoes? They rented them for the occasion, you know. Sally's mother told me that and I guess we better not say too much about it.

You know how critical people can be. The bridesmaids were outstanding in their orange dresses with lavender polka dotted ruffles and the bride was pretty too. It's the first time I've ever seen a bride carrying hydrangeas.

But Sally certainly has a style all of her own. Oh, do you really have to leave, Mary? I wanted to tell you about the reception. Well, I hope that doesn't make you wish you were at the wedding.

But it's an example of trivia, really. And I ask myself, you know, a hundred years from today, what difference will it make that she carried hydrangeas? And incidentally, you could have done that with a man talking too. Don't want to discriminate against the women.

You could have a man talking about the baseball scores, caught up in a world of baseball or anything like that, while above us burns the vision of the Christ upon the cross. So easy. So easy in our conversation just to be taken up with trivia.

Now, you've been asking questions, you've been listening to the person talk. The time comes when you want to comment too, of course. And I think this is very important.

Maybe there's something that you can add to what the person has said. This is always a joy to us in the work of the Lord, I think, when we're up ministering the word of God. And at the end of the meeting some person comes with maybe a splendid illustration of what has been said.

Maybe some balance of truth that we haven't seen at all. I tell you, it's a wonderful thing. People commenting on what has been said and adding to it, maybe making a correction.

And this is important too. This helps us in our conversation and keeps us from becoming people of extremes. What else? Well, I think it's a good idea to praise whenever you can.

To praise whenever you can. You know, a lot of people in a lot of people's lives, very little sunshine comes. And a nice thing every day to bring at least some sunshine into a person's life.

But the difference between praise and flattery. We should avoid flattery. And sometimes in our efforts to avoid it, we avoid praise too.

What is flattery? Well, flattery is saying something to a person that seems like praise and is utterly insincere. Utterly insincere. You don't believe it at all.

It isn't true at all. And you go ahead and say it. But praise is when it's genuine.

And the Apostle Paul followed this dictum, didn't he? And you've noticed it in his epistles. Generally speaking, in his epistles he begins them with something praiseworthy about those to whom he was writing. He doesn't have any in the epistles of the Galatians that seems to be fire and thunder there, but because of the doctrinal error that was creeping in.

But even in the Corinthians, he could be thankful to God that they were enriched with all utterance and knowledge. It was really not much credit to them. It was a gift of God, the grace of God.

And yet he finds time at the beginning of his letters to drop a word of praise and encouragement. And this is a great thing to people today. Then in our conversation, we should be positive, not negative.

You know, didn't Alph Gibbs used to speak about the person who was born in the objective case and the kickative mood? Something like that. Well, we don't have to be like that. We can be positive, not negative.

We can be thankful, not complaining. Ephesians chapter 5, and verse 4. Ephesians chapter 5, just quickly, and verse 4. It says, Neither filthiness nor foolishness, talking or jesting, which are not convenient, but rather, giving of thanks. What a wonderful thing to be filled with thanksgiving day by day.

People like to be around a person like that. Now I'll turn this tape over and the rest of this message is on the other side. Chapter 5, and verse 4. Ephesians chapter 5, just quickly, and verse 4. It says, Neither filthiness nor foolishness, talking or jesting, which are not convenient, but rather, giving of thanks.

What a wonderful thing to be filled with thanksgiving day by day. People like to be around a person like that. Another thing in our conversation with one another, a danger to avoid is the danger of jumping to conclusions.

I hear a person for a while. I think I know what they're going to say. Then I barge in some very helpful comment.

I completely missed the point. That wasn't what they were talking about at all. It's so easy to do that.

We jump the gun. We don't listen until a person is through, and then we just miss it. Now, I have a little illustration of that that you might like to listen to, and it might help to fix it in our minds.

That's the wedding still going on. Okay, here we go. Don't jump to conclusions before you hear all the facts.

A lady invited several friends to a mushroom steak dinner. When her maid opened the can of mushrooms, she discovered a slight scum on the top. Since the guests were expected at any moment, the lady

suggested, give the dog a little, and if he eats it, it's probably all right.

The dog licked it and begged for more so the dinner was completed. After the main course, the maid came in to serve the dessert, but her face was ashen white. She whispered in her employer's ear, Ma'am, the dog's dead.

There was only one thing to do, and the lady did it. She called the doctor to come with the stomach pump. Sometime later, the guests were reclining after the doctor had left in various stages from the use of the stomach pump.

The lady called the maid and asked, Where's the dog now? The answer came, Out on the front steps, Ma'am, where he fell after the car hit him. Well, I think you get the point, don't you? Wait till the person gets through to say, then come into the conversation. Building communication skills.

What else should we think of in this connection? Well, the scripture has another admonition for us. In Ephesians, chapter 4, 15, it says, Speaking the truth in love. I like that.

You know, the balance of scripture is absolutely marvelous. Speaking the truth in love. The Lord Jesus always did that, and then marveled the gracious words that proceeded out of his lips.

Just speaking the truth without love is a very one-sided testimony, isn't it? Just speaking in love without the truth is of no value at all. The perfect balance is this. Speaking the truth in love.

And in that connection, there's another verse of scripture that says, Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. That's in Colossians, chapter 4, verse 6. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Think of the Lord Jesus.

John, chapter 4. He said to the woman, Give me to drink. I'll tell you that was grace. For a Jew to say that to a Samaritan woman, the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

He said, Give me to drink. Grace. A few verses down, he said, Go call thy husband.

Now that was the salt, wasn't it? That was the salt. He didn't do that to embarrass her. He didn't do that to hurt her.

He did it to convict her of sin, that she might be brought to the feet of the Savior. Give me to drink. Go call thy husband.

Another occasion, he said to the woman caught in the act of adultery, Neither do I condemn thee. That was grace, wasn't it? He said, Go and sin no more. I love that.

That's the salt. That's the salt. And incidentally, I see in that an indication of the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus.

I think if you and I were saying that, we would say, Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin just as little as you can. Jesus couldn't say that.

The Lord Jesus couldn't say that. God can't say that. God said, My little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not.

Praise God, he adds, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. God cannot condone sin. God cannot tolerate sin.

And I love to read those words of the Lord Jesus. I know that he is God. All right, another suggestion is this.

Try to, when we engage in conversation, try to involve strangers or quiet persons in the conversation. Also, children. And almost every group of people, when they get together, there are people who stay in the shadows, stay in the background, don't have very much to say.

Really, it's a courtesy and a kindness to involve them, and oftentimes they have some very wonderful contributions to make. Also, children. Well, I don't think I have to labor this point, do I? How much we learn from the boys and girls, how far ahead they are, and what insights God gives to them out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.

As thou ordain strength because of thy foes. And I pray to God for the contact I've had with boys and girls, and for the subjects that have come up, and for the meaningful questions that they have asked me, things that I never thought of before in my life. You know, this is very important on the mission field, too.

Sometimes the national believers resent missionaries because when missionaries get together, they'll speak in the presence of the nationals in the English language. They won't bother to translate it for the nationals, and sometimes the nationals are just neglected in the conversation. Well, the Lord Jesus would never have done that.

With all the fuss that there has been in this country about the Watergate tapes, really it's quite an object lesson to us to be careful with our conversations, isn't it? Be careful in the use of tongue. The tongue is found in a wet place and very apt to slip, isn't it? Another thing that we should do is avoid being a compulsive communicator. I don't know whether this is a nervous reaction with us or what, but many of us are just compulsive talkers.

We have to be at it all the time, and the Scripture is filled with admonitions on this subject. Let me read a few of them to you. Proverbs 10, verse 19.

It says, In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. What does that mean? I think it means the more I talk, the more I just prattle on, the more danger there is of saying something I shouldn't say. Especially when people are trying to top this one.

Somebody tells a story, somebody else tries to top it. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. He that hath knowledge spareth his words.

Proverbs 17, verse 27. Ecclesiastes 5.3. A fool's voice is known by the multitude of words. And then that lovely word in James chapter 1, verse 19.

Be swift to hear, slow to speak. Isn't that good? Be swift to hear, slow to speak. Somebody has prayed this prayer.

Lord, fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff, and nudge me when I've said enough. Good prayer. Somebody once introduced Thomas Edison as the inventor of the talking machine.

And Thomas Edison got up and corrected the introduction. He said, I'm the inventor of the talking machine that can be stopped. That was the difference.

The first talking machine that can be stopped. Another key, building communication skills. Avoid lying or exaggeration.

How easy it is to exaggerate. Sure, that's a failing with many of us, even in Christian work. You know, reporting the results of the last campaign and the last crusade, the tens can easily slip into the hundreds.

You've heard that one, Mother, there's a hundred cats in the yard. John, I've told you a thousand times not to exaggerate. Shun gossip, backbiting, and slander.

Brother, Bram Hall will be speaking about tongues and the tongues in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. And it's been a subject that's caused horrific division, of course, among Christian people. But I want to tell you something that really bothers me, and that's this.

That a person can be a gossip and a backbiter and be in good standing in the assembly. And it shouldn't be. It shouldn't be.

We react and rightly against anything that causes division in the assembly by way of charismatics. But I think we should react just as strongly against gossip and backbiting, don't you? And certainly just as wicked as the abuse of tongues, if not more so. Bill Gawthard, in his seminar, defines gossip as sharing private information with others who are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution.

Good. Sharing private information with others who are neither part of the problem nor part of the solution. Lord, deliver us from gossip.

Deliver us from evil speaking of others. Deliver us from backbiting. And deliver us from idle words, remembering that men will give an account for every idle word that they utter.

And don't be a boaster. I was telling the Christians this morning about that time when this matronly lady steamed up to Winston Churchill and said, Mr. Churchill, I don't think I've ever told you about my grandchildren. And he said, no, and you don't know how happy I am.

Don't be a boaster. Avoid swearing and profanity and minced oaths. Minced oaths are the Christian sins in this regard.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for God will not hold him guiltless but take of his name in vain. That means you don't swear by Jesus Christ. It also means you don't say Jee, which is a contraction of Jesus.

It also says you don't say Jeepers Creepers, which is a contraction for Jesus Christ. It means you don't swear by the heavens, because it's the throne of God, or by the earth, because it's his footstool. Doesn't it mean that? It means you don't say darn, because darn is another, it's a minced oath for damn, and when you darn a man, you damn him to eternal fire in your heart.

It's an awful thing, isn't it? Damn you. That means I wish you were damned. Well, darn is a minced form of that same expression.

And there are all kinds of those words that are used today, and they should be eliminated from the Christian's vocabulary. A policeman was asked by the judge what the prisoner said when he was arrested, and the policeman said to the judge, Leaving out the bad words, and the judge said, By all means, leave out the bad words. He said, Absolutely nothing.

That's the world today, and that's what Christians have to work in the midst of, and we are polluted by it, and we have to go to the Lord for cleansing from defilement. I remember a dear brother, Dunlop, in Cleveland years ago. He was a contractor, a builder, and this day he went out to the job where they were building, and he parked his car there by a bend in the road, and as he was leaving the lot and going back to his car, he heard a man say something he in writing either, and the man said, Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Dunlop, I'm sorry I said it.

Mr. Dunlop went to his car, and just before he got to his car, another car came around a bend and just smashed his car to smithereens. If he hadn't stopped to talk to that man, he probably would have been in the car. He told me that story, and I never forgot it.

He was a sensitive Christian. He spoke to the man about it, and it probably saved his life. Finally, avoid sarcasm and unkind remarks.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. You know, one of the quirks of fallen human nature is that we're often most unkind to the people we love the most. Isn't that true? You know, a young person, for instance, can go out and lean against the fender of his Mustang and be so charming and outgoing with his peers, and he can come home and he can really be terrible to live with.

It can be true. Terrible to live with. A poet said, One great truth in life I found while journeying to the West, the only folks we really wound are those we love the best.

We flatter those we scarcely know, we please the fleeting guests, and deal full many a thoughtless blow to those we love the best. Will that speak to my heart? How true to life that is. May the Lord help us in the use of our tongue, in our conversation one with another, that no worthless communication can proceed out of your mouth, that which is good to the use of edifying as a need may be that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

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