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The words we speak are powerful. They can affect others either positively or negatively. Proverbs 18:21 says it this way: “Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue....” With our words we have the power to bring life and peace to others. Two practical ways to help us accomplish this are to pause before we speak and to aim for and pursue peace as we speak.

Here are two verses that help us to pause before we speak.

Proverbs 29:20:

Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

James 1:19:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak....

By pausing before we speak, we can consciously decide to speak words that bring life and peace and refrain from speaking words that don't. Some situations we encounter are more complicated than others. Especially in these situations, it is important to be slow to speak, not hasty in our words. We see Jesus Christ operating this principle in a challenging situation. In the record of John 8, the scribes and Pharisees asked him a question with the goal of tempting him. Jesus' response would directly affect the life of the woman brought before him, who had been accused of adultery.

John 8:4-8,10,11:

They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But

*Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.
So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.
And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.
When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?
She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*

Jesus wisely paused and waited for God's answer. Then he spoke words of truth that preserved this woman's life. His words truly brought life to her. The words he spoke would have also brought peace to her heart.

*Colossians 3:16:
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom....*

Keeping God's Word as our standard, we have the greatest resource to help communicate words that can lift a burden, lighten a heart, and bring life and peace. When the Word dwells richly in our hearts—when we are reading and thinking it consistently—it is easier to pause, bring those edifying words of life and peace to mind, and speak them.

Another practical way we can help assure that our words will bring life and peace to others is to follow after peace.

*Romans 14:19:
Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

The Greek word translated "follow after" means to pursue. That is an active word! As we make up our minds to actively pursue what makes for peace, rest, and harmony, our words will reflect this. We frame our communications with the aim of bringing life and peace.

One way we can actively pursue peace in our speech is by watching *how* we say things, not just *what* we say. When our body language and tone reflect peace, others

are more likely to be peaceful also. Pursuing peace gives us a head start in speaking words that bring life and peace to others.

The words we speak are powerful! Our words can bring life and peace as we choose to base our communications on the highest standard anywhere—God’s Word. As we allow the Word of God to dwell in us richly, we can pause and bring His words of life and peace to our minds and lips—especially in challenging situations. As we aim for and pursue peace, our communications will reflect the truth of God’s Word in our hearts. We will see that our words do have power to bring life and peace to others!

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