

**BUILDING OTHERS UP**  
**Ephesians 4:29-30**

**ONLY IN AMERICA ...**

**EVER WONDER ...**

A young couple got married and left on their honeymoon. When they got back, the bride immediately called her mother. “O Mama, we’re back from our honeymoon and everything has changed. He is saying the most awful things...he’s using these four letter words that he has never said to me before...O Mama it’s terrible, you need to come and get me.” Mother responded: “That’s terrible, tell me exactly what these awful four letter words are!”  
**“O Mama, words like *dust, wash, iron, cook...*”**

There is power in our words. Long lasting power...The author of Hebrews speaks about Abel in **Hebrews 11:4**: because of his faith and obedience - “*He still speaks even though he is dead.*” Even though he died thousands of years ago, he is still speaking to us.  
**That’s the power of our words for good or for evil.**

Phillips Brooks, the foremost minister in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, author of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”, said:

*This is the difference between men whose power stops with their death, and those whose power really opens into its true richness when they die. The first sort of men have mechanical power; and the second have spiritual power. And the final test and witness of spiritual force is the ability to cast the bodily life away and yet continue to give help and courage to those who see us no longer; to be like Christ, the helper of men’s souls, even from beyond the grave.*

**What legacy will you leave behind by the way you speak to others and what you convey?**

You can speak from beyond the grave through faith and obedience to God’s Word.

Words that may seem insignificant today may be the means through which God uses your voice long after your journey on earth is done.

**READ: EPHESIANS 4:29-30**

**Eph 4:29-30 (NIV)**

**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

In this portion of the epistle, Paul is addressing morals and ethics among the Christian church. He draws on his knowledge and understanding of the O.T. He was well aware of the ancient wisdom literature such as Proverbs, etc. These writings emphasized speaking “rightly” – speaking uplifting words. This would serve as a reminder to the church that things are not any different in God’s eyes than they were when first instituted and required of the people of God.

For example – here in Ephesians:

Eph. 4:25 – speak the truth

Eph. 4:29 – speak words that build up

Eph 4:30 – don’t grieve the Holy Spirit

Eph. 5:3-4 – no filthy or foolish talk or course joking

You can walk away from it. You may not be part of the inner circle of degenerates anymore, but you can walk away and please your Father in Heaven.

In the O.T.:

Prov. 12:25 – good words make one glad

Prov. 15:23 – proper answers and saying the right thing at the right time

Prov. 25:11 – a word fitly spoken – is like Gold

Zech. 1:13 – the Lord answered gracious and comforting words.

One time when Florence Littauer was using this verse for a children’s story she explained to the children that our words are like blocks and we can help others build up their lives with our words. One of the children really seemed to grasp what she was trying to communicate and explained: “so when we speak good words we are building others blocks, and when we speak bad words we are knocking other’s blocks down.”

**Are you a blockbuster or Blockbuilder.**

**I’ve got . . . GOOD NEWS!**

**1. You can CHOOSE - (Ephesians 4:29a):**

**The first three words (NIV):**

***Do not let...** - Ephesians 4:29a*

These first three words are GOOD NEWS because they are evidence that we have a choice. We can choose whether to build up or tear down. I’m not good at reading poetry, but listen to these words and I will try not to destroy the impact...

*I watched them tearing a building down,  
A gang of men in a busy town.  
With a ho-heave-ho and a hearty yell,  
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.*

*I asked the foreman, “Are these men skilled,  
And the men you’d hire if you had to build?”  
He gave a laugh and said, “No indeed!*

*Just common labor is all I need.  
I can easily wreck in a day or two  
What builders have taken a year to do.”*

*I thought to myself as I went my way,  
Which of these roles have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care,  
Measuring life by the rule and square?*

*Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,  
Patiently doing the best I can?  
Or am I a wrecker, who walks the town,  
Content with the business of tearing down?*

**You can choose whether to build up or tear down.**

Some might object . . . “Pastor, you just have to realize that I cannot control my words. I would love to use them to build up rather than tear down, but I just cannot control my tongue - afterall, James 3:8 says,”...

*But no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

You are right – **you** can’t control your tongue...but there is something you can do:

*...offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

***(Romans 6:13, 14)***

The Lord can make that which we offer to him to fall under his control. It is your choice: keep on spewing out-of-control words or offer your words to the Lord and ask him to do a purifying work in your heart and in your tongue.

I used to speak fluent FRENCH (if you know what I mean). It took a long time of praying for that to go away. It finally did – almost without realizing it. As I have compromised in my walk here and there over the years, the first indicator that I am off-track is the language that comes out of my mouth. It could be choice words, or it could be the way I speak about others, but my speech betrays me. Someone on my day job at the Lab was just telling me that he is trying very hard not to use foul language, and he didn’t realize how much foul language he used until he tried to stop.

Which brings me to the next bit of GOOD NEWS . . .

**2. You can REFUSE (Eph. 4:29b):**

Our text says:

***Do not let ANY unwholesome talk come out of your mouths... -Ephesians 4:29b***

You see, every time you let unwholesome talk come out of your mouths verse 30 tells what you are actually doing:

***you...GRIEVE the Holy Spirit of God. -Ephesians 4:30***

**Isaiah 63:10** – is one of only two places in the O.T. where the Spirit of God is called Holy Spirit. Isaiah tells us what it means to *grieve the Holy Spirit*:

*Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their ENEMY and he himself FOUGHT against them. - Isaiah 63:10*

I don't know about you, but I've got enough things working against me without making the Lord fight against me.

**What's the solution? - 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:**

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body [that includes our tongues] be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and HE will do it.*

God has the power to sanctify our tongues so that we *do not let ANY unwholesome talk come out of our mouths.*

**If you don't refuse . . . you lose . . .**

[PICTURE OF A NICE SPORTS CAR] A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted. As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him.

He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box. Curious, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, [PICTURE OF A NICE BIBLE] leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold. Angry, he raised his voice to his father and said, "with all your money you give me a Bible?" And stormed out of the house – never to return again.

Many years passed, his father was growing very old. He knew he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received notice from a lawyer that his father had passed away. He willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things.

When he arrived at his father's house, remorse and regret filled his heart. [PICTURE OF A BEAUTIFUL STUDY] He began to search through his father's exquisite study. In the top drawer of his Father's desk he found that same Bible that he had thrown to the floor so many years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse:

**Matt 7:11-12 - *If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!***

As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name; the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words PAID IN FULL. How many times have we missed God's blessings

because they have not been packaged the way we expected and have responded with unwholesome talk?

This is the GOOD NEWS, you can CHOOSE, you can REFUSE. What is the positive result?

### 3. You can INFUSE (Ephesians 4:29c):

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is HELPFUL for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

[PICTURE OF WILLIAM JAMES] What a need there is today for those who infuse encouragement into others. BTW: I put his picture up there cause I think he must have been a biker in his day ☺

*The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be APPRECIATED.  
-William James*

The power of words to encourage and build up and benefit others is incredible.

*“It may seem insignificant to say a word or two,  
But when it is ENCOURAGEMENT, what wonders it can do!”*

*Many of us DIE with the music still in us.  
-Oliver Wendell Homes*

*See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.  
Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come.  
(Song of Songs 2:11)*

Our Text says: ***What is helpful for building others up, according to their needs.*** There may be someone at home that is still in the winter, waiting for the season of singing to come, a word of encouragement to sing the music that is still in them. There may be someone at work who is still in the winter, there may be someone in the church that needs your encouragement.

There may be someone you know that has a song that needs to be sung.

A race that needs to be run,  
A piece that needs to be played.  
A scene that needs to be staged,  
A tale that needs to be told,  
A book that needs to be sold,  
A rhyme that needs to be read,  
A speech that needs to be said.

If you know such a person, don't let them die with the music still in them. Speak words of encouragement that are ***helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*** – as our text today tells us.

## APPLICATION:

*What time is it?  
Time to do well,  
Time to live better,  
Give up that grudge,  
Answer that letter,  
Speak the kind word to sweeten a sorrow,  
Do that kind deed you would leave till tomorrow.*

Being sanctified to God is a lengthy process – our entire life time actually – but it is a process that the Holy Spirit of God will do in each of our lives if we just let Him. It starts with recognizing our faults and our need for God to help us because we can't do this kind of change on our own and in our own strength. We would and do fail miserably, but God knows that. He is here with us today to meet you half way. Your part is to acknowledge your need before Almighty God and that you really want Him to do this work in your life. His part is to start the process by the Holy Spirit and see it through to completion as you continue to yield to Him every day. You can measure your progress by your speech and your actions. No progress is too small for God. Each of us is unique, and each of us takes our own amount of time to become what God has ordained us to be for Him.