



Life Principles Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God

THE MESSAGES WE SEND

KEY PASSAGE: Ephesians 4:29

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: John 3:16 | Romans 5:6-8; 8:14-16 | Ephesians 3:20 | 1 Thessalonians 5:23

SUMMARY:

Words are powerful tools.

They can build up or tear down. You and I can not carelessly say whatever we want and then expect a quick apology to heal all wounds. Even words spoken in haste can deeply hurt someone. Of course, not all messages we send are verbal. Facial expressions and body language can communicate acceptance or rejection, like or dislike, love or hate. Sometimes, simply our presence sends a powerful message.

What are you communicating through your words and actions? Make sure it's a message that will please the Lord as well as lift up those around you.

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES:

The Power of Words

The apostle Paul instructed believers, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29). This doesn't just mean that we should avoid cursing, but that what we say should bless others. Words have tremendous power—all of us are the products of what people have said to us. Parents, teachers, other authority figures, and friends have encouraged or discouraged us through their words. The tongue can even influence entire nations—Hitler destroyed Germany and much of Europe through his lies, while Churchill's leadership energized England and the Allies to defeat the Nazis.

Three Essentials to Wholeness

God designed man in three parts: body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Our soul includes our mind, will, emotions, conscience, and consciousness. Our heavenly Father is primarily interested in our spirit—the part of us that relates to Him. Whatever affects the spirit of man will affect his soul and ultimately his body. But all three parts of a person are affected by how we interpret what has been communicated to us.

Every person must have a sense of belonging, worthiness, and competency to be emotionally whole. In other words, we must feel accepted, worth knowing and loving, and able to succeed in life.

Only God can fully meet these three essential needs. *He can give us a genuine sense of belonging.* Romans 8:14-15 says, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" Once we have trusted Christ as our Savior, we belong to our Creator. *God also gives us a sense of worth.* The Father loved us so much that He sent His only Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins—not because we deserved it but simply because God loved us (John 3:16). His desire is for us to feel worthy. *The Lord even gives us competency.* When you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, His Spirit came to live within you and enable you to do the Father's will (Eph. 3:20).

These three aspects—belonging, worthiness, and competency—are like a tripod. A person

needs all three to be complete emotionally. Through belonging we feel *acceptance*; through worthiness we feel *loved*; through competence we feel *secure*. Those who have only one or two—or none—will be ill-equipped to cope with the challenges of life.

If you are not emotionally whole, it's likely a result of what people communicated to you in the past. I encourage you to stop and analyze who or what sent you the message that you were unacceptable, unworthy, or incompetent. It may have been a teacher who said you were dumb or a spouse who declared he or she no longer loved you. Perhaps your parents told you that they really didn't want you or that you were a financial burden. Unless you are willing to allow God to heal you, these kinds of injuries will follow you all your life. The Father has made you loved, acceptable, capable. But you must choose to move past the negative messages others have communicated to you.

Words of Caution for Parents

As a mother or father, you need to be very careful not just to say the right words to your children but to watch what you communicate nonverbally to them. For example, if your seven-year-old wants to talk to you while you are watching television, and you tell him, "Not now. Can't you see I'm enjoying myself?", you are sending a powerful message about the child's worth. He will learn that he is less important to you than a television show. Or if your daughter did her best but earned a "C" or "D," don't heap shame and guilt on her. Don't compare her to a sibling or another child who does better in school. You will crush her self-esteem, teach her that it's impossible to please you, and ultimately, discourage her.

What you communicate to children will affect their moral and theological beliefs too. When you say nothing if the cashier gives you too much change or you boast about it later, your children learn that it is okay to be dishonest. If you complain that you can't afford to give ten percent to God, then your kids will learn not to trust the Lord for His provision and to question the teaching of the Bible.

Fathers, use wisdom in how you talk about women in front of your daughters. If you are constantly talking about appearance—criticizing overweight women or praising those who are attractive—your daughters will learn to value their appearance over their character. They may become obsessed with their weight and develop low self-esteem or even an eating disorder. If you express appreciation for women who dress seductively, your daughters will learn to dress inappropriately to win your approval. Unfortunately, risqué clothing usually attracts the wrong sort of attention from young men, and your daughters may experiment with sexual immorality and possibly end up pregnant.

Instead, seek to build up and encourage your children in the things of the Lord. Communicate that your kids are accepted, loved, secure, and competent because of Christ. Resist the urge to measure your children against others who are better-looking, smarter, or more successful. God evaluates each of us by our own potential. Ask Him to help you encourage and challenge your sons and daughters to be the best they can be—without comparing them to anyone else.

CONCLUSION:

Everyone requires a sense of belonging, worthiness, and competency in life. But these three needs can only fully be met through a personal relationship with God through His Son Jesus. Our heavenly Father wants each of us to feel loved, accepted, and eternally secure in Him.

No matter how you've been treated, what others thought you were worth, or who rejected you—God still loves you. He wants to heal the wounds of the past and give you an unshakeable foundation for life. If you will surrender fully to Him, the Lord will use you in ways you would never have dreamed. ✝



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