

CAPITALIZING ON THE POWER OF OUR WORDS

By Robert J. Tamasy

Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting many unforgettable men and women of God, often through CBMC. One of these was Robert D. Foster, who entered the presence of the Lord in 2016, at the age of 96. A simple philosophy guided his life: "Life is worth living; people are worth loving; God is worth trusting."

For many years Bob wrote a weekly meditation, "Take Two for Monday Morning," in which he told stories to communicate the truths of the Scriptures in powerful ways. One of those was about a day when Josiah Wedgwood, the English creator of famous Wedgwood pottery, escorted a British nobleman through his factory. One of the Wedgwood employees, a young teenager, accompanied them.

The nobleman used profane and vulgar language in his conversation with Wedgwood. At first the boy was shocked by the language; then he became fascinated by the man's coarse jokes and laughed at them. Wedgwood, however, was disgusted and deeply distressed.

At the conclusion of the tour, he showed his visitor a vase of unique design. The man was charmed by its exquisite shape and rare beauty. When he reached for it, wanting to see it more closely, Wedgwood purposely let it drop to the floor. It shattered into many tiny pieces! Cursing in anger, the nobleman cried: "I wanted that vase for my collection, and you have just ruined it by your carelessness!"

His host responded, "Sir, there are other ruined things more precious than a vase that can never be restored. You can never give back to that young man, who just left us, the reverence for sacred things his parents have tried to teach him for years. You have undone their labor [with your language] in less than half an hour."

What power our words have, for great good or for great damage. This is not to judge people, since many of us in a time of stress or moments of anger have let slip a poorly chosen word or two. But as we see in the Bible, a timely word can serve as soothing medicine, while unwise words can do much damage:

Our words are a reflection of our character. Would we want others to evaluate the kind of people we are based on the things we say and how we say them? *"Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips"* (Proverbs 4:24).

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MONDAY MANNA
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Our words are a reflection of our hearts. Like a filled bucket, when bumped, spills out its contents, our words can reveal our innermost thoughts, feelings and values. *“The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil”* (Proverbs 15:28).

Our words are a reflection of our beliefs. Many people choose their words to make an impression on specific individuals or groups. Those of us who follow Jesus Christ understand that our faith should govern our speech. *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord”* (Psalm 19:14).

Our words are a reflection of our self-control. Impulsive, unrestrained people may spew words they later regret, but wisdom will rein in our tongues to prevent verbal disasters. *“A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered”* (Proverbs 17:27).

© 2021. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC’s Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today’s Workplace; Pursuing Life With a Shepherd’s Heart, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob’s biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had a problem with the use of poorly chosen words, profanity, or blurting out whatever comes to mind in the heat of the moment? If so, what have you done about it – or did you think it was not a problem for anyone to be concerned about?
2. How would you handle a superior, coworker, customer or client whose profane or vulgar speech is an embarrassment or makes a poor impression on those who hear it?
3. Do you agree that the words we say can be a good reflection of our inner character, or as the Bible terms it, our hearts? Why or why not?
4. What does our speech – the things we say, whether in public or private – reveal about our beliefs and our faith, if anything?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 10:19-21,32, 12:14,18, 13:3, 15:4,23, 17:20,28, 20:15, 21:23, 22:11; Ephesians 4:29

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