

**Ephesians 4:29** 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. (NASB)

Remember last time...we said this whole “Christianity” thing is work? Yup, well here is where it starts. We already covered lying – which we said stems from an unclean heart, anger – how that creates evil when we do not take up responsibility and handle it appropriately and now we are going to hit home how we are to be uplifting and not destructive.

The main thing I want to point out in this verse is the point of giving grace to those who *hear*. You see, your “edifying” of one person gives grace to those who hear it. It brings proof of the testimony of Jesus in their lives and this awesome power of Jesus needs to be broadcasted. What does this “broadcast” look like? When someone does something that builds up another person, you let that person know – you go to them and tell them “Hey, you really encouraged me when...” or when with friends you let others know how “this person” or “that person” helped you in your life. You tell others about that testimony for the sake of telling and living what Jesus is all about. That means, that it needs to be audible and in front of people. I can think of times when our pastor asks people to stand up in service and just “give thanks” publically. We can stand up tell the people of the church of individuals who have worked in our lives and been a testimony to us; or telling others what an encouragement they have been to us. So often we build others up in private, behind closed doors; yet we are so quick to put-down and start fights with someone in front of a crowd or a group of people. That is not Biblical. Remember Jesus said:

**Mathew 18:15** "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in *private* (NASB – emphasis mine)

Is it not just like us to do everything we are told not to do. God said do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and what do we do? Eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God tells Lot’s wife not to look back when they are running out of Sodom during its destruction and what does she do? She looks back and poof, she turns to a pillar of salt, The Bible tells us not to lie but we do. It tells us not to commit adultery in thought or deed, it tells us not to get drunk, cheat, steal, covet, envy, or gossip. How many of those things have you done in the last month? That all stems from an unclean heart that is still dirty with sin and desperately needs the power of Jesus.

Here Paul tells us, do not let any unwholesome, corrupt, foul, darkened word proceed from your mouth and we know that the words we speak come from our heart [**Mathew 12:34, 15:18; Luke**

**6:45]** Yet, we love to talk about how someone is rude, immature, or stupid and broadcast that to everyone except the person we are talking about.

**Do You Have An Example?**

Yes I do! We as a country love to bash our President. It is our culture. Ever watch a late night show? David Letterman has a segment called, “*Great Moments in Presidential Speeches*” – and it shows JFK, then Ronald Reagan, then George W. Bush usually edited/out of context for the purpose of tearing him down, making him look stupid; which ultimately lowers his credibility as a President. I find it very ironic that “We the people” choose our president by a “Majority Rule” vote, and then when the guy we voted for won via “Majority Rule” gets in the office, we turn around and say how “stupid” and incompetent he is. Now, honestly, what does that say about us as a country? Let do some math. If our President is “stupid”, and the people choose the president by a “Majority Rule” vote, then does that not make “the people” stupid too? After all WE chose THAT President? Now, I am not saying our country is stupid. However, what I am saying, we chose that President; therefore, how can we complain about own willful choice? We need to take responsibility for our actions and accept the consequences.

Moreover, the advocates, say “It is just in fun”. However, it only takes time and then it becomes reality. Just like that boy on a “*Christmas Story*” – it’s all fun and games until someone gets hurt. We are so accustomed to doing this we don’t even recognize that, *that* kind of speech does not edify and build up but rather tears down. Colossians mirrors and expounds on this verse a little bit more when Paul says: now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. [**Colossians 3:8ff** NASB]. Paul says all that for the purpose of looking past stereotypes, forgiving one another, loving one another, being unified so the peace and word of Jesus will live and be active you. However, when we don’t have this mindset, going back to the President example, no wonder people do not trust the President! All the public ever hears is what the President is doing wrong, trying to tear him down, and making him look bad. Sure the President makes mistakes and at times looks foolish, but guess what – we all DO! The point is, he is our commander and chief and there is nothing you can do about it. You must live with it and you must manage it. But we all love to sit back, not lifting a finger to make *any* difference for the purpose of dragging his name through the mud about “how stupid he is” – well, I am not sorry, that is gossip and that is evil.

Yet, this just proves that we love to cling to that which is sinful; because tearing down is so much easier when you take someone out at the knees rather than getting off the couch and effectively dealing with it.

**So How Do We Fix Our Problem?**

Well, in order to cling to what is good rather than evil we must really put forth *effort* to fill our minds and our hearts with good. Paul gives us a great opportunity to do that. He states:

**Philippians 4:8** ... whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. (NASB)

That is what we need to do, is to focus our minds on that which is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute, excellent, worthy of praise.

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**\*Do the “Mighty to Save” Questionnaire\***

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Once we begin to think this way and focus on the good Godly things in life we will slowly but surely never let unwholesome words come out of our mouth, because it is not in our heart and we will be able to edify and build up others because those things are at the forefront of our minds.

Now, this verse brings out another important aspect. We covered that it definitely speaks to letting no unwholesome word come out of your mouth – that is a constant and absolute – NEVER let an unwholesome word come out of your mouth. At the same time, we must judge the degree of building up is appropriate for the situation.

A recent study conducted and printed in NY Mag states:

“For the past ten years, psychologist Carol Dweck and her team at Columbia... studied the effect of praise on students in a dozen New York schools. Her seminal work—a series of experiments on 400 fifth-graders—paints the picture most clearly.

The researchers would take a single child out of the classroom for a nonverbal IQ test consisting of a series of puzzles—puzzles easy enough that all the children would do fairly well. Once the child finished the test, the researchers told each student his score, then gave him a single line of praise. Randomly divided into groups, some were praised for their *intelligence*. They were told, “**You must be smart at this.**” Other students were praised for their *effort*: “You must have worked really hard.”

Then the students were given a choice of test for the second round. One choice was a test that would be more difficult than the first, ... The other choice, Dweck’s team explained, was an easy test... Of those praised for their effort, 90 percent chose the *harder* set of puzzles. Of those praised for their intelligence, a majority chose the *easy* test. The “smart” kids took the cop-out.

In follow-up interviews, Dweck discovered that those who think that innate intelligence (“**You must be smart at this.**”) is the key to success begin to discount the importance of effort. *I am smart*, the kids’ reasoning goes; *I don’t need to put out effort*.

The studies were done on multiple socioeconomic classes and proved consistent with the original study.

The article goes on to say and ends with :

“It [**Praise**] has to be based on a real thing—some skill or talent they have.” Once children hear praise they interpret as meritless, they discount not just the insincere praise, but sincere praise as well.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes if we praise inappropriately for the situation we can actually do more harm than good. It is important that we judge that correctly. Just like the punishment must fit the crime, the reward must fit the deed. For instance, when people confess or confide their sins to us...we are quick to say “*It is ok*” as if it were not a big deal. We shower those wounds with “*God forgives you*” and then we wonder why people habitually practice sin and believe they are saved when the Bible is clear in **1John 3:10** that those who habitually practice sin are *not* saved, but *rather* children of the devil.

Therefore, we can conclude that edification and building up is not always a “*Happy feeling*”. Sometimes when you build a building you have to chisel stone, or cut a board to fit in the framework. The purpose being a unified building. So, if someone comes to you confessing their sins, ask them – have you asked and prayed to God to forgive you by the blood of Jesus? Have you asked those you wronged for forgiveness explaining how your sin marred the name of Jesus? Have you repented of your ways and turned toward the Kingdom in *that* aspect of your life? We so want the easy, cop-out – “*God forgives you*” mentality, and that doesn’t build up but rather destroys, waters down, and diminishes the purpose for Jesus’ death.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://nymag.com/news/features/27840/>

Paul hits this concept earlier in Ephesians:

**Ephesians 2:21- 22** in [Jesus] the whole building, being *fitted* together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being *built together* into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (NASB)

Do you think that you take this many people and put them together, we are not going to have to chisel away at some of our personalities or habits? I can give you a prime example. I can be very obnoxious, big surprise huh?, and although when my wife and I first dated it was cute...once married, not so cute – she had to chisel away at me to change someone, so we would be a better “Fit” so we can be “built together” for the purpose of Jesus – not because she wanted her way, but for Jesus. Paul also states this concept here:

**Ephesians 4:11-12** And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (NASB)

Here we have the builders of the home, the plumber, the carpenter, the roofer, the cement pourer – they are all equally important. Some are behind the sense, some you see all the time, some you only care about when it floods and some you only care about when you have to sell your home – but they are all important; because without one, your home is not complete. Moreover,

**Ephesians 4:16** from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (NASB)

Here we have again the fitting, but also that the fitting is held together by a supply. When you and another person are fitted together either as friends, or as spouses you provide a supply. That supply will either be destructive or edifying to others whether you like it or not. So if you and your friend or you and your significant other are seeing a change affecting your relationship, first thing you need to do is check yourself before you wreck yourself. Examine exactly what you are supplying to the body of believers; is your supply causing a *growing* of the body in love, or is it feed bitterness, envy, wrath, deceit, slander, or gossip.

### CONCLUSION

1. If we are letting unwholesome words be a part of our speech and vocabulary, we are proving that our hearts are not clean but actually dirty.
2. We need to replace unclean hearts with a heart that wants to speak edifying words for the purpose of growing & supplying others to be more like Jesus.
3. When there is a problem, speak to them, encourage them and restore them – help chisel away the unneeded, worthless pieces of their calloused heart.
4. When there is a need for praise, supply that need and let others know about it for the testimony and sake of the awesome power of Jesus.

Throughout this week challenge yourself to fulfill Philippians 4:8. For guidance find page 8 of this document. Page 8 has the lyrics to *"I Can Only Imagine"* by Mercy Me. Follow the same exercise as the "Mighty To Save Lyrics" questionnaire; and reflect what it would be like to be surrounded by the Glory of Jesus in Heaven. Take 15 minutes and just imagine it, picture it in your mind and just *think* about it.

I encourage you to do this multiple times this week.

Grace and Peace,

You are Loved

# Mighty To Save Lyrics

by Hillsong

Everyone needs compassion  
A love that's never failing  
Let mercy fall on me

Everyone needs forgiveness  
The kindness of a Savior  
The hope of nations

Savior He can move the mountains  
My God is Mighty to save  
He is Mighty to save

Forever Author of salvation  
He rose and conquered the grave  
Jesus conquered the grave

So take me as You find me  
All my fears and failures  
And fill my life again

I give my life to follow  
Everything I believe in  
Now I surrender I surrender

Savior He can move the mountains  
My God is Mighty to save  
He is Mighty to save  
Forever Author of salvation  
He rose and conquered the grave  
Jesus conquered the grave (x2)

Shine your light and let the whole world see  
We're singing for the glory of the risen  
King...Jesus (x2)

Savior He can move the mountains  
My God is Mighty to save  
He is Mighty to save  
Forever Author of salvation  
He rose and conquered the grave  
Jesus conquered the grave (x2)

Shine your light and let the whole world see  
We're singing for the glory of the risen  
King...Jesus (x4)

1. Name one (1) thing in this song that is:

True: \_\_\_\_\_

Honorable: \_\_\_\_\_

Right: \_\_\_\_\_

Pure: \_\_\_\_\_

Lovely: \_\_\_\_\_

Of Good Repute: \_\_\_\_\_

Excellent: \_\_\_\_\_

Worthy of Praise: \_\_\_\_\_

*Take a moment and pray about what, in this song specifically, is True, Honorable, Right, Pure, Lovely, Of Good Repute, Excellent, and Worthy of Praise.*

# I Can Only Imagine

by Mercy Me

I can only imagine  
 What it will be like  
 When I walk  
 By your side

I can only imagine  
 What my eyes will see  
 When your face  
 Is before me  
 I can only imagine

*[Chorus:]*  
 Surrounded by Your glory, what will my  
 heart feel  
 Will I dance for you Jesus or in awe of you  
 be still  
 Will I stand in your presence or to my knees  
 will I fall  
 Will I sing hallelujah, will I be able to speak  
 at all  
 I can only imagine

I can only imagine  
 When that day comes  
 And I find myself  
 Standing in the Son

I can only imagine  
 When all I will do  
 Is forever  
 Forever worship You  
 I can only imagine

*[Chorus]*  
 I can only imagine [x2]  
 I can only imagine  
 When all I will do  
 Is forever, forever worship you

1. Name one (1) thing in this song that is:

True: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Honorable: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Right: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pure: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lovely: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Of Good Repute: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Excellent: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Worthy of Praise: \_\_\_\_\_

*Take a moment and pray about what, in this song specifically, is True, Honorable, Right, Pure, Lovely, Of Good Repute, Excellent, and Worthy of Praise. Find 15 minutes this week to just think about these lyrics and try to imagine what it will be like to be surrounded by His glory in Heaven.*