

Compass Bearing #21
Devotions to Navigate the Coronavirus Pandemic
"Taming the Tongue" by Pastor Mark Ellcessor
Saturday, May 9, 2020

Right now, many people are spending much more time with their families than usual. On a normal, pre-pandemic weekday, people would be out the door before 8:00 a.m. for work or school. Nine or ten hours later, the family would reconvene for supper, unless the kids had events or the adults had activities to attend. Toss in homework, and sometimes families didn't even have a few hours together a day for meaningful conversation. Ah, the good old days!

These past few months, things have been quite different. No sports or concerts to attend. No school and work to go off to (so much is being done from home). No restaurants (eating out has been done in the car, where we are forced into conversation). We have had more opportunity than ever to talk with one another. Ah, the good new days!

More opportunities to talk mean more opportunities to build up and to tear down with the tongue. Here are some tips from the Bible on our use of words:

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing (Proverbs 12:18).

⁹ *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness.* ¹⁰ *Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be (James 3:9-10).*

²⁹ *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 (Ephesians 4:29).*

Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity (Proverbs 21:23).

Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies (Psalm 34:12-13)

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Colossians 4:6)

The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit (Proverbs 15:4)

What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them (Matthew 15:11)

Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips (Psalm 141:3).

¹⁹ *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,* ²⁰ *because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires (James 1:19-20)*

Here's an idea.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you which of these verses you need to hear most today. Then spend some time meditating on that verse or those verses. What is God saying to you? How can you live out these principles in tangible, practical ways? What difference will it make in your family if you do?

The choice is yours. Read Scripture then go on doing what you've always done, or let the Word of God change you in transformative ways. As James 1:22 says, "*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*"