

The Value of Words

2020-06-12 Pastor Sharon Tidd

Over the past few months of isolation I have found myself spending a lot of time doing Wordscapes on my phone. It helps keep my brain sharp, expands my vocabulary, and entertains the wordsmith in me! All good goals, in my mind. I started this long before COVID-19 restrictions kicked in, but have played it a lot more during the restrictions.

If you're not familiar with Wordscapes, it's basically a cross-word puzzle that has to be filled in with words made from a random collection of 7 or 8 letters. I'm usually pretty quick to identify the words and place them. But it seems that every once in a while I will struggle to find the last word. Sometimes it's because it's a word I don't know ... but sometimes it's a well-known word that just eludes me. Frustrating!

As I was reflecting on this reality of the game, it got me thinking about my desire to "have the last word" in life, especially in an argument or debate. Is that true for you? And do you get frustrated when you don't get that last word? I sometimes do. Of course, if I wisely realized and accepted that two people in a debate can't both have the last word, I'd be much better off!

Words are important in life; and not just in arguments. They can be used to bring a lot of good! We use them to teach and instruct, to encourage, to sympathize, to inspire. On the flip side, they can also bring great harm. Words have incredible power to bless or to curse.

The Book of Proverbs in Scripture provides lots of wise counsel on the subject of speech. It highlights the truth that words matter. Proverbs 10:20-21 declares, "The tongue (speech) of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. The lips (speech) of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of sense." Proverbs 16:24 says, "Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." And Proverbs 25:11 shares, "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances." Proverbs 15:1 wisely states "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up

anger.” Proverbs 12:18 shares, “The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

James 1:19 also reminds us of the importance of words, offering great advice, especially for conflict situations: “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

It’s good to be reminded of the power of my words ... both spoken and written. I hope I am choosing to use my words to bless and uplift. I hope my words are received like honey from the honeycomb. I hope they offer wisdom and counsel when needed the most. I hope they offer healing and not harm. I hope they communicate love. Are you with me?

I’m grateful for a God who speaks words of love into my life daily. He has provided His Word as a “light to my feet and a lamp to my path” (Psalm 119:105), and I know that when I walk according to His Word and speak His truth, my words have the power to bring life (John 6:68)!