

# Corrupting Talk - The Devil's Sandwich

Ephesians 4:29

## Introduction:

**Galatians 5:19-21 ( ESV )** <sup>19</sup>Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Most Christians are able to identify and expose the easily seen sins of adultery, fornication, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, murders, drunkenness, and revellings... and reprove those who practice such things... but often Christians are less able to identify and expose the hidden sins of enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, and envy.

Allowing these sins to fester can cost souls, tear apart families, and destroy congregations.

## I. The Tongue Is A Serious Matter

**James 1:26 ( ESV )** <sup>26</sup>If anyone thinks he is religious and **does not bridle his tongue** but deceives his heart, this person's religion is **worthless**.

**Matthew 15:18 ( ESV )** <sup>18</sup>But what comes out of the mouth **proceeds from the heart**, and this defiles a person.

**Ephesians 4:29-32 ( ESV )** <sup>29</sup>Let no **corrupting talk** come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for **building up**, as fits the occasion, that it may **give grace** to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

## II. What Does "Corrupting" Mean?

### A. Thayer Definition: - sapos

- 1) rotten, putrefied
- 2) corrupted and no longer fit for use, worn out
- 3) of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless

Used in the Bible to describe spoiled figs or rotten fish or anything that gets so degraded it becomes useless.

**Matthew 13:47-48 ( ESV )** <sup>47</sup>"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered **fish** of every kind. <sup>48</sup>When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the **bad**.

**Luke 6:43 ( ESV )** <sup>43</sup>"For no good tree bears **bad fruit**, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,

### B. The Meaning in the CONTEXT of Ephesians 4:29:

vs. 22-24 - Paul is contrasting the old man vs. the new man.

v. 25 - The unbeliever lies, the believer speaks truth.

vs. 26-27 - The unbeliever expresses anger, the believer controls his temper.

v. 28 - The unbeliever steals, the believer works.

1. Just like lying, anger and stealing, so also corrupting talk is associated with the heathen who don't know Christ.
2. The new man, in contrast to the old man's rotten, worthless talk, uses his words to build up and give grace.

### III. So What Kind of Talk Is Corrupting Talk?

#### A. Some think Paul's point here refers primarily to profanity or crude jokes, but the context shows that the idea is much broader.

1. Since foul language and taking the Lord's name in vain is "rotten talk," I'll take this opportunity to bring up the use of euphemisms in today's culture.
  - a. Webster's Dictionary defines euphemism: "The substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt."
  - b. There's a site called "101 Great Cuss Word Alternatives" <https://wehavekids.com/parenting/101-Great-Cuss-Word-Alternatives>. But many of these recommendations I would never use.
  - c. Tim Hawkins does a hilarious routine called "Christian Cuss Words," but again, even some of these I wouldn't use.
2. We can quickly become overly self-righteous in this area, but clearly God wants us to give thought to the words we use.
  - a. "darn," - euphemism for damn.
  - b. "heck" - euphemism for hell.
  - c. "shoot" - GUESS!
  - d. "freakin" - GUESS!
  - e. "gosh" - euphemism for God
  - f. "golly" - euphemism for God
  - g. "geez," - euphemism for Jesus.
  - h. "doggone it" or "dadgummit" - euphemisms for G\*\* d\*\*n it.

#### B. Harsh Criticism: A Form of Corrupting Talk

1. One definition of "grace" is "favor, graciousness, kindness, beauty, and pleasantness." ***From BibleKnowledge.com (paraphrased):***  
We should be imparting "grace" to the hearer of our words, not corruption, not tearing down. We can choose to speak good, positive, and edifying words to people to help build them up and empower their lives in Christ. Or we can choose to speak negative words of harshness, criticism, and pessimism. The Lord wants us to speak to others in a loving, kind, gracious, uplifting, and edifying manner – not in a condescending, critical, and judgmental manner. People need to be built up as to who they can become – not torn down and broken by corrupt talk.
2. If we think of spoiled or rotten fruit, like Jesus did, Four Implications come to mind.
  - a. **Rotten Fruit Doesn't Nourish** - It's good for nothing and needs to be thrown out. So it is with **negative, condescending, critical, harsh talk**. It doesn't strengthen or improve or help; it's good for nothing.

- b. **Rotten Fruit Will Probably Make You Sick** - Rotten food not only fails to nourish, it can also cause negative harm. So it is with rotten words – they can wound a person very deeply. Words can make people sick. Words can be like bacteria that spreads from husband to wife, from parent to child, from brother to brother.
  - c. **Rotten Fruit Smells Bad and Makes the Atmosphere Unpleasant** - The odor pollutes the room and affects everyone in it. So it is with **negative, condescending, critical, harsh talk**.
  - d. **Rotten Fruit Can Come from a Diseased Tree** – If the fruit is rotten as soon as it appears on the branch (as soon as the words come out of one’s mouth), then the tree itself is bad.
3. **If our idle words will be brought into judgment, how much more will harsh speech that tears down other people impact our judgment on that last day?**

**Matthew 12:34–37** - "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned."

#### C. **Biting Sarcasm is a Form of Harsh Criticism**

- 1. Our English word "sarcasm" comes from the Greek word "sarkasein" which means "to tear the flesh."
- 2. Cutting, tearing words can hurt, no matter how funny they were intended to be. "I was just kidding!"
  - a. Wives weep, husbands cower, and children finally give up under the barrage of criticism leveled in the home.
  - b. Harsh and demeaning criticism is the forerunner of divorce, the cultivator of rebellion, and often the catalyst that leads to broken homes and damaged children.
  - c. "Be constructive in your comments to a child—always. Never tell them, even in whimsy, that they are fat or dumb or lazy or homely. You would never do that maliciously, but they remember and may struggle for years trying to forget—and to forgive." ~ *Jeffrey R. Holland*

#### D. **God’s Wisdom On Avoiding Corrupting Talk That Tears Down**

**Proverbs 12:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup>There is one whose **rash words are like sword thrusts**, but the tongue of the wise brings **healing**.

**Proverbs 15:1 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup>A **soft answer** turns away wrath, but a **harsh word** stirs up anger.

**Proverbs 15:4 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup>A **gentle** tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it **breaks the spirit**.

**Proverbs 15:28 (ESV)** <sup>28</sup>The heart of the righteous **ponders how to answer**, but the mouth of the wicked **pours out evil things**.

**Proverbs 16:24 (ESV)** <sup>24</sup>Gracious words are like a honeycomb, **sweetness to the soul and health to the body**.

**Proverbs 17:1 ( ESV )** <sup>1</sup>Better is a dry morsel with **quiet** than a house full of feasting with **strife**.

**Proverbs 17:14 ( ESV )** The beginning of **strife** is like letting out water, so quit before the **quarrel** breaks out.

**Proverbs 18:21 ( ESV )** <sup>21</sup>**Death and life** are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

**Proverbs 19:11 ( ESV )** Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to **overlook an offense**.

**Proverbs 19:13 ( ESV )** <sup>13</sup>A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's **quarreling** is a continual dripping of rain.

**Proverbs 21:19 ( ESV )** <sup>19</sup>It is better to live in a desert land, than with a **quarrelsome** and fretful woman.

**1 Peter 3:4 ( ESV )** <sup>4</sup>but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a **gentle and quiet spirit**, which in God's sight is very precious.

**Galatians 5:14-15 ( ESV )** <sup>14</sup>For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup>But if you **bite and devour** one another, watch out that you are not **consumed** by one another.

**James 3:17-18 ( ESV )** <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then **peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere**. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

**James 4:1-2 ( ESV )** <sup>1</sup>What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that **your passions are at war within you**. <sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel...

## Conclusion:

### A. Prayers Can Be Hindered by the Words We Speak

1. **1 Peter 3:7 ( ESV )** <sup>7</sup>Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you <sup>of</sup> of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.
2. **James 1:26 ( ESV )** <sup>26</sup>If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

- B. "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit" (**Matthew 12:33**).