

alibi, apology, cleanup, cop-out, cover slip

BECKY COMBEE MINISTRIES

coverup, defense, disguise, evasion, explication, fish story, jive, justification, makeshift, misdirection, rationalization, regrets, semblance, shift, song and dance, story, substitute, subterfuge, trick, vindication, whitewash



The Power of Words

Has it ever appeared that your life was controlled by overwhelming circumstances and filled with measureless agony? What was your response to these difficulties? Sometimes our behavior is saturated with curt words and inappropriate actions instead of the love of God. And our thoughts – Well, we don't even want to talk about them. If we allow our mind to dominate us, then our disquieted spirit mumbles and complains and our words reflect despair, depression, and dread.

When I think about our thoughts, words, and behaviors, I am reminded of Thanksgiving dinner. This dinner is always "exceeding, abundantly above all you could ask or think." Its bounty is much more than enough. But after dinner, our entire being groans in overindulgence. How we wish we had stopped a few spoonfuls sooner! Similarly, when we are bombarded with stress, we often speak too quickly and we say too much. Unrestrained, our words and our actions are out of control.

To compound our trouble, instead of admitting our guilt, we make excuses for our behavior. I love our reasons. We say, "You don't understand," "I couldn't help it," "That's just the way I am," or

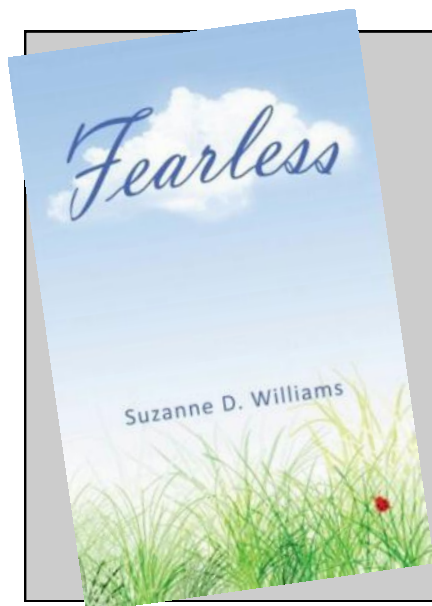
"My wife...my kids...my neighbors..." There is usually some person or situation that bears the load of our misconduct. When no one agrees with us, we admonish our audience to be reasonable. Loudly we cry, "Give me a break!"

There are several marvelous verses in the writings of Solomon that warn us about careless words. One of these verses states, "He who guards his mouth preserves his life. But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction." ¹ In *The Living Bible* this verse reads, "Self-control means

“We must choose words of life and reject words of failure and death.”

controlling the tongue! A quick retort can ruin everything." *The Knox Translation of the Bible* declares, "Thoughtless speech may bring ruin." These learned scholars agree that our words preserve or destroy us. King Solomon gives additional witness to this truth when he declares, "Life and death are in the power of the tongue." ² Truly, the foundation of success and failure is formed by our words.

In Proverbs 10:32, King Solomon uproots paltry excuses and destructive language when he declares, "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable." This verse highlights words that are



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fitting and suitable and reminds us that some words are inappropriate. In spite of the uproar of our mind, we must choose words of life and reject words of failure and death. We cannot be trapped and taken captive by our words.³

The Epistle of James gives us wonderful words of counsel. It decrees, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." What a great word, "slow." In *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, the word "slow" means "not quick in motion, not rapid, not hasty." It is also defined "acting with deliberation." My, wouldn't it be wonderful if our words were always godly, deliberate, and well-thought-out, instead of hasty and impulsive? Wouldn't it be great if we replaced loud, reactive words with words of love, grace, and forgiveness?

Is this possible? The small book of Jude gives magnificent wisdom. We are familiar with verse 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Yet perhaps we have not read verse 21 which begins, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Together these verses explain that as we pray in the spirit, we build ourselves up and therefore "keep ourselves" in God's love. However, if we do not pray and saturate ourselves with the strength of

God's Spirit, then we may fail as His ambassadors of love.

I have confirmed this in my own life. Although I am a student of God's Word, sometimes I fall short of loving behavior. My error is not usually lack of knowledge. It is failure to stay "built up" in the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 14:4, the apostle Paul says, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* defines "edify" as build and construct. We are edified, or built up, because we pray in the Spirit. Beyond our native language is this gift of God that speaks mysteries, that utters words we do not understand. As we pray in this unknown tongue, we receive God's strength and prepare our hearts for difficult moments.

Whenever I fail to speak and act lovingly, I give additional time to praying in other tongues. This is one of our greatest keys to victory. I also meditate in God's Word, again hiding it in my heart, but it is meditation AND prayer that pave the road of success. We cannot "keep ourselves" walking in God's love if we do not pray. Through prayer, the strength of heaven fills our lives. We must rely on prayer!

¹ Pr 13:3 NKJ ² Pr 18:21, author's paraphrase ³ Pr 6:2