

I. Introduction

- A. Percy and Florence Arrowsmith once held two *Guinness World Records*
1. The first record was for longest marriage of living couple (80 years)
 - a. The second was for the highest aggregate age of couple (205 years)
 - b. Both of them have since died, but that's a pretty impressive record
 - 1) Florence Arrowsmith left us this advice for a lasting marriage.
You must never go to sleep bad friends. If you've had a quarrel, you make it up. Never be afraid to say, "I'm sorry"
 - 2) Percy said the secret to marriage is two words— "Yes, dear."
 2. Which reminds me of another story about the secret of marriage
 - a. Couple celebrated 50 years of marriage (*rookies by comparison*)
 - b. Some asked the husband what was the secret of a great marriage?
Training. She was a communications major in college; I majored in theatre arts. She communicates well, and I act like I'm listening.
- B. We continue with *God @ Home* with a word or two about our words
1. There's an old proverb we use if someone says something hurtful
"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me"
 - a. Steve Martin routine as a televangelist interviewed by a magazine
 - b. When the article was printed, he was less than pleased with it
That article was full of lies and made up facts. If I'd have known they would have printed all that, I would not have lied and made up facts
 - 1) That old "*sticks and stones*" proverb is lies and made up facts!
 - 2) Proverbs assures us that words hurt (**11:9; 12:6; 12:18; 15:4**)
 2. James has a long section in James 3 on the power of words
 - a. We stumble in many ways; we all stumble in one way (**James 3:2**)
 - 1) Nobody is perfect. We all say the wrong thing at times, right?
 - 2) Or we don't say the right thing at the right time, right?
 - b. James earlier gives some good advice that should help (**Jam 1:19**)
 - c. God gave each of us two ears and one mouth— do the math, right?
 3. Let's go back to Ephesians to see Paul's straight talk on straight talk

C. We've seen what Paul says to husbands and wives in **Ephesians 5**

1. But what comes right before that? **Ephesians 4** and it applies too
 - a. We're supposed to live "*out with old; in with new*" (**Eph 4:22-24**)
 - b. We're made new in attitude of our mind (point in Ladies Class)
 - 1) We don't come to Christ only to let him change our thinking
 - 2) No, we are transformed by Christ, so we change how we live
2. Augustine writes of meeting an old lady friend after his conversion
 - a. Augustine once wrote, "*Lord give me chastity, but not just yet*"
 - 1) His former paramour ran after him, "*Augustine, it is I; it is I!*"
 - 2) He finally stopped and said, "*Yes, madam, but it is not I*"
 - b. So we are to become new people, but what exactly does that mean?
 - c. Paul will give some very specific ways we are to be transformed
3. Several of the things he says here has to do with how we use words
 - a. He intends this as general; how we use our words in relationships
 - b. We'll apply this specifically to how we use our words in marriage
4. The Queensberry Rules are in effect today– "*No throwing elbows*"

II. Straight Talk About Straight Talk in Marriage

A. **First**, we must tell the truth, whole truth, and nothing but truth (**4:25**)

1. Again, Paul is talking about church; don't lie because we are family
2. How much more important is total honesty in marriage relationship
 - a. You never just lie; you lie TO someone and AGAINST someone
 - b. Remember Ananias and Sapphira, "*You have lied to Holy Spirit*"
 - 1) Marriage is being one flesh; Paul will quote that truth (**5:31**)
 - 2) To lie to one another is to destroy foundation of a relationship
3. Bible says, "*All liars will have place...*" (**Rev 21:8**). Different liars
 - a. **Blatant Lies:** You intentionally twist the truth to suit purposes
 - 1) You say, "*I didn't mean it; I was just kidding.*" You mean it.
 - 2) You say, "*I didn't do that; it was someone else.*" It was you.
 - a) Trust is the coin of the realm when it comes to marriage relationship
 - b) Once that trust is lost, it is hard to get back. Always tell the truth

b. **Misleading Lie:** We can't tell what's technically true to mislead

1) So Lynn pesters me to go to the doctor. I go and he says–

Man, you've gained a lot of weight; this is really serious. You're so fat, I'm surprised the cops haven't been called in for crowd control. For a man your age, I'm really surprised that you're in this shape.

2) I don't want to tell Lynn that; there'll be culinary consequence

Doctor said that he surprised by the shape I'm in for man my age

3) Technical expression for misleading with the truth– *a lie!*

c. **White Lies:** These are little, harmless lies told out of convenience

1) We convince ourselves these are altruistic, to benefit others

2) Most white lies really gray, lies told to protect ourselves

a) GEICO commercial and Honest Abe, “*Does this make me look fat?*”

b) He pauses, looks confused, unable to answer... and she gets mad.

3) When I intentionally mislead my spouse, my marriage suffers

4) It's best to do what Paul says earlier of maturity (**Eph 4:15**)

B. **Second**, we are to use words that build up and don't tear down (**4:29**)

1. Words can't be unwholesome (*corrupting*, ESV or *abusive*, NLT)

a. The word here is literally “*rotting or decaying or decomposing*”

b. Words that belittle or tear down our spouse corrupts a marriage

1) Those unwholesome, corrupting words are too easy to say

2) But they're impossible to take back, and they often leave scars

2. Paul give us this warning when dealing with outsiders (**Col 4:5-6**)

a. How do you make the most of an opportunity with non-Christians?

b. If you want to communicate grace, then we must speak graciously

1) NIV “conversation” here is simply the word “logos” or word

2) To make the right impression, we must carefully weigh words

3) When trying to win people for Christ, loose lips sink ships

c. What about having a successful marriage? Watch your words.

1) No, that doesn't mean walk on eggshells (can't live that way)

2) It means that we need to recognize that words have power

3) **Note:** Paul says be careful how you act, then points to words

C. **Third**, the careful use of words especially applies when angry (**4:31**)

1. The word “mad” betrays tells us something important about anger
 - a. When angry or mad, we act crazy, right? Say or do crazy things
 - b. It also lowers the inhibition center of the brain, just like alcohol
 - 1) When we’re really angry, our words are not carefully chosen
 - 2) I once said to my wife, “*Honey, I really didn’t mean that!*”
 - 3) She said, “*Yes you meant it; you just don’t mean it now*”
2. Paul here runs the gambit from just about every kind of mad there is
 - a. **Bitterness**: That is anger we hold onto and strew over (a grudge)
 - b. **Rage**: That is flying off the handle (later, “*I didn’t mean nothing*”)
 - c. **Anger**: In case we say, “*I’m not any of that stuff, I’m just mad*”
 - d. **Brawling**: The attitude where someone is always looking for fight
 - e. **Slander**: Being angry at spouse and telling others exactly why
 - f. **Malice**: That’s the old “Revenge is a dish best served cold” idea
3. Remember this line in Paul’s description of love (**1 Cor 13:5**)

III. Conclusion

A. We say, “*Talk is cheap.*” And it can be; our walk must match our talk

1. Paul reminds us that words can be anything but cheap relationship
 - a. Our words can build our spouse up and deepen the relationship
 - b. But negative, damaging words pick at the fringes of a marriage
 - c. Until it unravels. Until it falls apart. Words are powerful things
2. Want a great marriage, OK, then choose your spouse very carefully
 - a. Too late for that? OK, then you must choose your words carefully
 - b. Positive, uplifting, encouraging words create atmosphere for love

B. Our straight talk about straight talk applies to more than just marriage

1. Peter says we’re entrusted with God’s very words (**1 Pet 4:11**)
2. This is why our words must be seasoned with salt– God’s words

Reach with our hands, touch this city; Lord, let our mouths speak Your truth! Use our blessings to bring justice; Let us be You, revive Your church; let us be You, on this earth.