

Bulletin

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Hello, October!

WISDOM IN YOUR WORDS

BY JIM DALY

ONE MOMENT CAN CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE. FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.

A moment like that came for me when I was 4 years old. My mom's friend, Penny, was visiting our house. Even at that age, I was chatty. That is, until Penny turned to me and said, "You have diarrhea of the mouth."

She said it with a smile on her face, so I don't think she meant to insult me. But her words felt like a gut punch, and I thought to myself, *I guess grown-ups want me to keep quiet.*

Looking back at that moment now, there's no mistaking the lasting impact it had on me. For many years after that, I held back on things I normally would have said. In some ways, that was a good thing. But it really set me back, too.

Fortunately, the Lord helped me find my voice again, and I've spent a good part of my adult life speaking to people. But it could have turned out differently.

The book of Proverbs repeatedly says that there is power in our words. Be wise in how you speak to others—especially your children. Comments you make in a moment of frustration or anger can leave deep scars that last for years. Use your words to build your children up, never to tear them down.

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**Tough
Questions
from Kids**

Is it OK to
lie to keep a
friend from
getting hurt?



OCTOBER 21 Bulletin

RECONNECT THROUGH MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

Think back to your dating days or your engagement period. Remember the hours you spent bonding with your significant other—the time you spent connecting with each other through deep, meaningful conversation?

If there's one thing my wife Erin and I have been working on in our marriage, it's this need for connection through meaningful conversation.

Dr. Terri Orbuch, an Oakland University professor and research professor at the University of Michigan, completed a 30-year study of more than 400 couples. She discovered the happiest of these couples spent time every day connecting with each other, talking about meaningful things for at least 10 minutes.

At first I had no idea what “meaningful conversation” even involved. But since that time, I've learned that all this means is getting to know your spouse's inner experience and social world—his or her daily routine, likes, dislikes, needs, emotions and dreams. It's about having an intimate knowledge of each other, kind of like the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:12: “Then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” That's exactly what married couples seem to be longing for—a return to the early years when they were fully knowing and fully being known by each other.



The goal of having meaningful conversation is to talk about things that keep you current and deepen your understanding of who your spouse is. What are his or her likes, dislikes, preferences, feelings, stressors, friends and life dreams? Each and every day married couples can choose to set aside 10 minutes in order to “rediscover” each other. What a simple way to stay updated about that special person to whom you are married!

I want to encourage you to make a commitment to your spouse—that you will fight for this daily time together for meaningful conversation. Make it your goal to talk for 10 minutes every day. You can discuss anything other than work, kids, household management, finances and your relationship. This can be done face-to-face or on the phone.

Take the time to continue getting to know your spouse, and in return offer him or her the gift of getting to know you. As Erin and I have discovered, this simple change can infuse new life into your marriage relationship.

—Greg Smalley

SHOW KIDS HOW TO APPRECIATE THEIR PASTOR

Honoring pastors and other church leaders has been a respected practice since the days of the early church. It reflects the mandate found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 to “respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work” (NIV).

October is designated as Clergy Appreciation Month. This celebration provides parents with the opportunity to model gratitude, while helping their kids recognize that God has entrusted pastors with the responsibility to oversee the spiritual well-being of His flock.

Modeling gratitude does not have to be an enormous production. You can send a card, cook a meal, buy a gift or offer your skills and services to help do work around the pastor's house. Here are a few additional ideas:

- Send the pastor and spouse a gift certificate to visit a bed-and-breakfast.
- Invite the pastor for a game of golf, tennis, etc., and pay any playing fees.
- Give prepaid tickets to activities especially enjoyed by your pastor and his or her family.

Regardless of how you choose to honor your pastoral staff, don't miss the opportunity to make Clergy Appreciation Month a regular event for your family.

—Pam Woody

THE TRUTH IN LIFE-GIVING WORDS

Not all words that are true are life-giving. You will need discernment to think through what truths your child needs and the timing of the truths. By the way, it's not bad to tell a child they are not good at something, but make sure to follow it up with something they are good at to give them helpful, life-giving information.

Philippians 4:8 says to think on things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and worthy of praise. In the next verse, Paul writes, “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Words based on truth set a momentum toward trust, genuineness and growth when given within the context of a loving intention.

Be genuine and honest with your encouraging words. If a child is awful at basketball and knows it, it is not helpful to say they are good at basketball. In fact, your words will lose their meaning if you give false encouragement.

—Danny Huerta

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

Christmas is just around the corner. Last year, it was a very stressful time of year for our finances. How can I not only survive the holidays, but enjoy them?

ANSWER:

Decisions we make in preparation for Christmas have an impact far beyond the holiday itself. Some of those decisions are economic, some involve the busyness of our schedules, others have to do with emotional pressure—but all of them build memories of the holiday season. Here are some suggestions to make Christmas better:

1. *Don't spend more money on Christmas than you can afford.* December 25 comes every single year. It's not a surprise, so plan for it!

2. *Give something of lasting value.* If you have small children, it's easy to buy something you think they will enjoy, only to find that by the end of Christmas Day the toy is broken, worn out or boring to them. Let your kids know that you would rather pay the same amount of money—or even more—for something they will enjoy for a longer period of time.

3. *Do something meaningful for someone else.* Make it a family project to do a good deed for a neighbor, shut-in or relative. It could be as easy as fixing a meal or babysitting.

4. *Focus on the spiritual, not material issues at Christmastime.* Let's take the focus of Christmas

off the gifts, decorations and parties and try to do something creative with our families that reinforces the spiritual emphasis of Christmas.

5. *Give something to yourself at Christmas.* Instead of giving an impulse gift, make a commitment to do some things right in the upcoming new year, like pay off debt, begin a savings plan and live within your means.

6. *Build memories.* By changing your focus to functions that build family memories, you can make Christmas a highlight.

(Adapted from the *Complete Guide to Faith-Based Family Finances* by Ron Blue and Jeremy L. White.)

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

We don't have to lie. Depending on the situation, we can get the help of an adult who knows the friend, or we can say to the friend, "I'm not going to tell you because I don't want you to get hurt." There are many ways to help a friend besides lying. God loves you and wants you to be truthful. Look for other ways to respond.

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