

Speaking to the soul



Gossip

Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops. Proverbs 26:20

These words couldn't be more relevant to today's world, in which gossip can be communicated faster than lightning. Words have always had the power to destroy, and many of the Proverbs focus on the danger of them being used carelessly. The trouble with words is that we all use so many

of them, and it is easy for them to cause hurt, pain and division.

Proverbs 17:27 reads: “A truly wise person uses few words.” I’m really grateful for that observation but, if I’m honest, I’m not sure what to do with it. I spend my days writing, mentoring, pastoring, preaching and teaching people, to say nothing of relating to the members of my family. Words are fundamental to the way we communicate, and although I could possibly use fewer words, I will still need to use a large number of them!

The writer of the Proverbs is concerned that we use our words to build, not to destroy. Building words are ones that bring strength and courage to other people. I love Proverbs 25:11: “Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.” We all need to aspire to share more words like that, keeping a watch on those words which can be more like Molotov cocktails! We all enjoy having privileged information, and the temptation to share it can be extremely difficult to resist. However, we must. If we ever say to someone: “Just between you and me”, “Promise me you won’t mention this to anyone else”, or “Just within these four walls”, you can be sure that we should have kept our mouth shut. The person you have shared your special nugget with will conclude that they are never safe sharing their private information with you in future. You have proved yourself to be a gossip.

The Psalmist knew what he was talking about when he said: “Take control of what I say, O LORD, and guard my lips” (Psalm 141:3). We all need to say a loud “Amen” to that!

QUESTION

How do you seek to avoid gossip?

PRAYER

Loving Father, help me to use my words in a way that will build people up today. Amen

Photo - Flowers on CNI's doorstep

