

Necessary Edification

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29)

Introduction

1. In Lesson Four, we discussed sins of the tongue at length.
2. We will not revisit that list but draw attention to it as examples of “corrupt speech.”
3. In addition, it may be that in our interactions with others we allow frustration and bitterness to direct our words and actions.
 - a. Speech that we intend to address and discourage such behaviors instead makes matters worse, inflaming the behaviors we seek to address.
 - b. Instead of helpful edification, we default to corrupt speech.
4. In this lesson we learn to discern between corrupt speech and edification.

Discussion

I. No Corrupt Word.

- A. In Eph. 4:29-32, Paul teaches us to abstain from corrupt speech and identifies its common motivators:
 1. The corrupt speech in this context seems to be what flows from:
 - a. Bitterness
 - b. Wrath
 - c. Anger
 - d. Clamor (clamorous outcry, as expressions of the above emotions).
 - e. And malice (ill-will, desire to injure).
 2. Eph. 4:32: The solution is to pursue:
 - a. Kindness
 - b. Tenderheartedness
 - c. Forgiveness
- B. “Corrupt”: GK *sapros*.
 1. Rotten, putrefied.
 2. No longer fit for use.
 3. Of poor quality, bad, unfit for use (Outline of Biblical Usage).
- C. Edification builds up but corrupt speech tears down.
 1. When people work together, there will be occasional frustrations that tempt and test our patience (Rom. 15:1; 1 Thess. 5:14).
 2. The ungarded, undiscerning, and immature may respond to these frustrations with insulting and degrading speech and behavior.
 - a. Name-calling.
 - b. Insulting speech intended to humiliate.
 - c. Character attacks, such as derogatory or disparaging conversation that tear down rather than edifying rebukes that direct the hearer toward the truth.
 3. The immature may feel justified in tearing down and insulting others, reasoning that the behavior justifies such a response.

- a. We may experience a sense of ridiculousness while observing others' behavior, and so we feel ridicule, mockery, or derision is the proper response.
- b. Question: Have you ever done or said something to purposefully make someone feel stupid or to humiliate them? _____
- c. James 3:14; Gal. 5:15: This reasoning and behavior does not come from above, but from below. It is corrupt.

II. Necessary Edification

- A. Edification always builds up.
 1. Edify: GK *oikodome*.
 2. The act of building or building up.
 3. "To promote another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness" (Outline of Biblical Usage).
- B. The role of every member of the body is not to receive edification only, but to train our tongues so that every word we speak may provide edification to our hearers as well.
 1. Edification is a work of the church collectively (Eph. 4:12).
 2. Eph. 4:16: In an edified congregation, every member is taught to aspire to and contribute to each other's edification.
 3. Rom. 4:19: "Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another."
 4. 1 Thess. 5:11: "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."

III. Edification Meets the Needs of its Hearers.

- A. Titus 2:15; 2 Tim. 4:2: At times, edification requires censure, rebuke or admonition.
 1. As a point of discernment, rebuke addresses incorrect behavior, to cause it to stop, correct, and change it for the better.
 2. "Rebuke" does not imply insult or humiliation (see point I., C. on the previous page).
- B. 1 Thess. 4:18: At times, edification provides comfort and consolation.
- C. Hebrews 10:24-25: Edification also exhorts to continue in what is good.
- D. At all times, edification flows from the word of God and builds up the hearer through reminders and increased understanding of divinely inspired truths.

Conclusion

1. Through this series, we have discussed the power of the tongue.
2. God has granted to us that, when we fill our lips with His truth, we can by His grace and power build up His church and kingdom.
3. What an amazing thought!
4. Let us, therefore, seek to grow to the fullness of Christ that our speech may be to God's glory and the building up of His church.