



## Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Our English language contains a lot of silly expressions and aphorisms. One that was brought to my mind recently is the statement: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." While I am sure this is meant to declare some resilience against insults and verbal abuse, we all know that it is not true – words can be very painful and can cause lasting scars. While words cannot break bones they can break hearts, tear apart relationships and damage our Christian testimony.

Today communication is instant, constant, global, and permanent. In the technological boom of "social media", we have the ability to communicate with people halfway around the world, and to make our thoughts known to everyone in the world. Now more than ever, every single thought can be immediately broadcast throughout the world and launched into cyberspace. What once was restricted to face-to-face conversations, phone calls or "snail mail" now is available to virtually anyone with access to a computer or cell phone. Consequently, people of all ages can communicate whatever they want, anytime day or night, without having to give any thought or account to what they are saying.

Ironically, all this digital social networking has actually hindered people from being social. People don't talk, they post. They don't have conversations, they share blogs. They don't have face-to-face conversations, they make comments. They don't have relationships, they have followers.

One troubling issue that has emerged out of the milieu of social media, is the malice and venom that can be spewed with just a click of a button. As a pastor, I have already had countless conversations with people seeking counsel about how to resolve a conflict or hurt feelings that occurred via some form of social media. In addition, I have heard many accounts of people who had an affair or some illicit relationship that first originated under the covert auspices of a virtual medium.

Perhaps like never before, we need to hear and heed the warnings of Scripture concerning the dangers of careless words:

*"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt.12:36-37).*

*"How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. ... It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so" (Jms.3:5-11).*

*"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Eph.4:29).*

Is social media inherently bad, evil, or sinful? Not any more than television, landline phones, the printing press, or the Pony Express. However, the magnitude of today's internet technology carries with it a massive demand for godly wisdom and vigilance. With increased technology comes the increased need for discernment and self-discipline. Is there good that can come from such technology? Of course. But as with so many things, the good does not erase or excuse the bad. We must be careful not to be careless.

Together in and for Christ,  
Pastor David

**Scripture Readings for the Week** (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #46):

*Deuteronomy 13-15; Ezra 1-5; Psalm 131-133; Ecclesiastes 7-8; Zechariah 1-7; Acts 15-16; 1 Peter 4-5*

**Recommended Reading:**

*"12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You" by Tony Reinke*