



Power Mouth

Adapted from "Family Power" series by Wayne Murray

Words have incredible power to **build up** or **tear down** our emotional state. In the book, *The Blessing*, John Trent and Gary Smalley tell a powerful story:

Diane's parents had tried unsuccessfully for years to have children. Perhaps that is one reason why their joy was unbounded when they learned that they were expecting their first child. Everything seemed normal during the pregnancy and delivery, until they saw the doctor's reaction. When Diane was given to them for the first time they saw that her left arm had never developed below the elbow. There were tears in the delivery room and deep concern as test after test was performed on Diane. As doctors and specialists sought to determine the extent of her physical problems, Diane's parents did not know how they should handle the anxious questions from relatives and friends. Two days later, the doctors told Diane's parents some encouraging news. In all their tests, they had not picked up any other signs of medical or physical problems. Diane appeared to be a normal, healthy baby girl, with the exception of her left arm. After the doctors had gone, Diane's parents bowed together in prayer. They thanked God that their daughter had no other serious problems. However, they prayed something else that proved to be of tremendous benefit to their daughter. In that hospital room, with Diane nestled in her mother's arms, her parents prayed that their love for her would make up for any lack of physical abilities she possessed. They decided that morning that they would encourage Diane to become all that God would have her be, in spite of the problems they and Diane would have to face along the way. Years have gone by since Diane's parents prayed for her in that hospital room. In fact, Diane is 19 now and attending a major university. However, something special about Diane draws your attention away from her empty sleeve, **particularly** when you listen to her play a beautiful melody on the piano with only one hand. Diane has had to deal with tremendous obstacles in her 19 years. The stares, giggles, and tactless questions of her peers in grade school. She has dealt with the fears and uncomfortable feelings of whether to go to a dance in junior high. The questions and worry that perhaps she would never date in high school, just to name a few. On the other hand, throughout the real-life struggles of being born handicapped, Diane received a precious and powerful gift from her parents – the security of knowing she was highly valued and unconditionally accepted. Diane said, "My parents didn't try to hide from me the

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fact that I was different.” They have been very realistic with me. But I always knew, and they have told me over and over, that “I am their greatest claim to fame. Whether I was trying out for softball or my dad was teaching me how to drive, they have been my biggest fans. They have prayed for me and thought the best, even when I’ve pouted and got angry at God because of my handicap. Without a question, my parents deserve a lot of credit for helping me accomplish that things I have.”¹

¹ John Trent and Gary Smalley, *The Blessing*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 77.

COURAGE

C1: Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 4:29 (ESV) 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.

- Why do you think Paul encourages us to be careful with the words that come out of our mouths?

C2: Read and answer the following.

Genesis 1:3 (ESV) And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Proverbs 18:21 (ESV) Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

John 1:14 (ESV) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- What do these verses communicate to you about our words?

C3: Think about your childhood and take 10 minutes to make a list of the words spoken to you and who spoke them:

- What words **built you up** and who spoke them?
- What words **tore you down** and who spoke them?
- How have these words impacted you in the stage of life you are in now?



C4: Do you use your words to build up or tear down in your relationships?

C5: How will you continue to use your words in your relationships?

STRENGTH

S1: Paul uses the word edify in Ephesians 4:29. Edify is a word that has the connotation to “build”.² Read the following and answer the questions.

Proverbs 12:18 (ESV)

Proverbs 15:4 (ESV)

Proverbs 16:24 (ESV)

- What type of words do you use to those you love?
 - Tear down
 - Build up
 - Unwholesome
 - Wholesome

S2: Paul teaches us in Ephesians 4:29 that our words will impart grace to those who hear them. Grace is simply giving people what they do not deserve. Think about a time when you did not display grace with your words. How do you think it made the person to whom you said them feel? What could you do to make it right? How could you improve what comes out of your mouth in the future?

S3: In Ephesians 4:29, Paul uses the word *corrupt* when he references what type of words that should not come out of our mouth. Corrupt means the process of “decay”.³ In other words, Paul is admonishing believers not to allow anything rotten, putrefied, worn out, bad, poor quality, or worthless to come out of our mouths. Has there ever been a time when corrupt words have come out of your mouth? If so, what was the result?

² J. Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible 1*, (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 51.

³ G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich, eds., *Theological dictionary of the New Testament 7*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1964), 94.

ENDURANCE

E1: Misspoken and thoughtless words can do damage to your relationships. Why are our words so important?

Proverbs 12:18 (ESV)

- Write out two words that can bring healing to someone in your realm of influence.
- After you have written them, now either speak, write, text, or email them to that person. How did you feel after you sent them? What was their feedback?

E2: Every single day the priest was to pronounce a blessing over the people. Read and answer the following.

Numbers 6:24-26 (ESV)

- What do these verses speak to you?
- How could you use them in your home?

E3: Abraham spoke a blessing over Isaac, Isaac spoke a blessing over his son Jacob, and Jacob spoke a blessing over each of his twelve sons and over his two grandchildren. Paul writes eloquent blessings to the growing churches all over the Roman Empire. It is biblical to speak a blessing over your family.

John Trent and Gary Smalley in their book, *The Blessing*, outline five elements of giving a blessing. The elements include: a meaningful and appropriate touch, a spoken message, attaching a high value to the one being blessed, picturing a special future for him or her, and an active commitment to fulfill the blessing.⁴

⁴ John Trent and Gary Smalley, *The Blessing*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993).

- Write out a specific blessing for each person in your home and speak those words over them. What were the reactions of the persons? What were your thoughts and feelings? Set aside a time once a week to pray your written blessing over each family member.