Dear Open Door Family,

There is such a difference between Building something and Tearing something down. I have a friend who is the administrator of a large Christian Camp. The easiest time they have getting volunteers is when they are doing demolition - tearing down a shed or barn or old structure. It is a whole lot harder to get volunteers to help to build or construct something. The reason is that it takes little or no skill to tear something down - anyone can swing a sledge hammer and break things up. However, when you are building something you have to have skill, or it will not be made correctly. Tearing down a wall is a whole lot easier than building a square, strong wall. Please keep that in mind as we look at the following verses.

Proverbs 12:18 (NET) Speaking recklessly is like the thrusts of a sword, but the words of the wise bring healing.

Speaking carelessly, without thinking first, causes as much destruction as someone swinging a sword wildly around. None of us would dream of going into a room full of people and swinging a sword around. That would be harmful and destructive. That is why the writer of the proverb used such strong language. Words are powerful; they can be used to hurt people or to help people. They can cause deadly damage or they can bring healing. How am I using my words?

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV) Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Paul wanted to encourage the Christians in Ephesus to use their words to help, to encourage, and to build up. Do NOT speak in unwholesome ways - in destructive ways, in ways that are harmful. Make sure the words you speak are HELPFUL for building up. Which is easier to tear down or build up? Tearing down takes very little skill in the world of construction as well as in our relationships with others. That is why it is important to remember that we are called to build up, we are to think of the other person's NEEDS - not our own. I may want to let loose and vent my anger or frustration, but if there is someone around I must first ask will this be helpful to them or will it hurt them? If it does not build up and help, then I must NOT speak. The last thing Paul says is that our words should BENEFIT those who listen. We are supposed to think before we speak so that our words will build others up, so that others will benefit from the things we say. If there is NO benefit to the other person in my words then I should remain silent. My words must build others up, must be helpful to them in their need, and they must profitable for the other person. If I do this then I can say that I am truly honoring the LORD God with my words.

**PRAYER:** Lord Jesus, help me to think before I speak. Help me to think clearly and to speak wisely and to consider the impact of my words on others. May I use my words to build up, NEVER to tear down.

Pastor Mark Kieft