

September 24, 2021

I was wearing a new t-shirt on my trip to the store; it said **Living & Effective Heb. 4:12**. One of my favorite verses about God's Word. While I was going up and down the aisles at grocery store, I noticed a man was looking at me. I nodded and kept going, and then there he was again looking at me and my shirt. I kept shopping, running into him 3-4 times. Finally, he came close and said, so you like the Bible? I said, "Yes sir, I really do. It has what I need to know so that I can live life, please God, and help other people." He smiled and then went on by.

These days many people don't have any understanding why someone like me would love the Bible. If I could talk to them for 2-3 minutes, I would tell them that I love the Bible because it is very practical. It helps me to live in a way takes my focus off of myself and puts it on others. It gives me a desire to encourage and help others.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible teaches me to guard what I say carefully.

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.

Eph. 4:29 Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear... (NLT)

Look at the practical teaching on how to speak in a way that helps others. What would happen in our conversations with others if we made it our goal NOT to speak using abusive or unwholesome words? What would happen if we chose our words with the idea of helping or building someone up? What would happen if we chose our words thinking about the needs of the other person? What would happen if our end goal in speaking was that our words would be a benefit or encouragement to others?

I have found these words both challenging and humbling when I realize that I have fallen short and that my words may have hurt someone rather than helped them. That is when I go to the Lord and ask for His help so that I can understand what kind of words would meet the need of the person I'm talking to. The wonderful thing about this verse is the constant reminder that I can use my words to build up and encourage.

May the Lord help each one of us to seek to speak in order to build up rather than tear down.

PRAYER: Lord God, thank You for Your Word. Thank You that it is Living and Effective. Thank You that it has the power to change hearts and lives. Thank You for the challenge to use our words to build up and encourage others. Help me, Lord God, to do this more and more.

Pastor Mark Kieft