

Hateful Words

Scripture Reading — Matthew 5:21-22

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths ...
—Ephesians 4:29—

Thirteen-year-old Marcy had little use for her loud, obnoxious, smelly little brother. “You’re just a jerk!” she blasted at him again and again. Ten-year-old Mike didn’t exactly adore his older sister either. “You’re really stupid!” he would often fire back. Their rivalry and toxic words polluted the peace of their household.

Do you call people nasty names? The Bible calls this “unwholesome talk.” It literally means “trash talk.” It’s something that athletes often use in their sports competitions. But God says it’s wrong to insult, wound, tear down, cut up, threaten, or intimidate another person by our words. Hurtful words are hateful words.

Jesus reveals in his Sermon on the Mount that hateful words are not the real problem. The deeper problem is a hateful heart. And hatred in the heart is equivalent to murder. Could it be that a few well-chosen put-downs are counted so serious by God? See what our Lord Jesus says. There is no escaping the verdict of his judgment. Words, as well as weapons, can wound.

What kinds of words should we use to replace our hate-filled ones? What can we say that would express care instead of disrespect? How can we be peacemakers by what comes out of our mouths?

Prayer

Lord of love, I need to change my ways of communicating. Too often I show contempt for people by calling them names, but I need to change my heart. Fill it with your love instead of my hatred. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Sin](#), [Judgment](#), [Life](#), [Emotions](#), [Peace](#)

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