

live the called-out life

God's thoughts are higher than ours. Let
His words direct your choices today.

Today's Bible selection:

Matthew 12:34-37, Your words show what is in your hearts. Good people bring good things out of their hearts, but evil people bring evil things out of their hearts. I promise you that on the day of judgment, everyone will have to account for every careless word they have spoken. On that day they will be told that they are either innocent or guilty because of the things they have said. *[Contemporary English Version]*

Last week's devotional looked at several records management concepts and encouraged the careful storage and preservation of personal artifacts important to your family history. Today we will back up a little and look at what may be the first cardinal rule of business records management: generally, the work we create as employees belongs to the company we work for; it does not belong to us. And we all need regular reminders that company records may be obtained for legal purposes. A wise Information Technology professional once advised, "Never say anything in an email that you wouldn't want broadcast on the evening news" – or, in updated vernacular, that you (or your family) would be embarrassed to find gone "viral" on Facebook or Youtube.

We are accountable for what we say, as today's Bible verses warn with great seriousness. Once the word is out of our mouths – or sent by our fingertips – it is no longer ours to own, control, edit, revoke, deny, or delete. "Tweeting" and texting can be fun and convenient ways to capture momentary thoughts and to document rapidly developing events; they also can persuade us to post careless and unkind statements.

Praying for right thoughts is the precursor to gaining control of our speech that is spoken, written, or keyboarded.

Let the Spirit change your way of thinking and make you into a new person. You were created to be like God, and so you must please him and be truly holy.

Ephesians 4:23-24, *CEV*

Words, especially offhand and teasing statements, can be received and considered with much more thought than the speaker intended. Look at the first part of the Bible quotation above: "good people bring good things [words] out of their hearts." Therefore, being accountable for what we say is much more than trying not to do harm. Asking "What can I say that's encouraging?" is more useful than fearing, "What if I say the wrong thing?" and is certainly a better choice than intentionally using words to dress people down and to complain.

Can't we invest careful and "long term" words in the same way that we would hope to leave a financial bequest to help others establish their lives on sound footing for their ease, blessing, and benefit? Since "words can bring death or life" [Proverbs 18:21], it is tremendous what building and valuing of life we have the power to do with our speech! And, since it's said to take as many as eleven or more expressions of affirmation to offset the hurt caused by one derogatory statement,

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we have a lot of work to do, haven't we? Imagine words as coins; are we spending, wasting, saving, hoarding, investing?

Called-Out Life E-devotional from Betsy Lowery, author, *Pause: Everyday Prayers for Everyday Women*, 2004

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9

The purpose of Called-Out Life E-devotional is to encourage you in your Christian walk and to point out verses of scripture that will remind you of God's love and of His will for believers. You are welcome to forward this message to anyone who might care to receive it. Email betsy@vhbc.com to comment or to request changes to the distribution list.

