

Week 22
153/212

Transforming Daily
“... a word spoken in due season ...”
Proverbs 15:23

One of the best ways to encourage someone is with words. At the same time, one of the worst ways to discourage someone is with words. The right word at the right time can bring happiness, contentment, confidence, direction, insight, strength, and a smile. I have heard it said that for every deconstructive criticism spoken 23 words of constructive edification must be spoken to undo the affects of that one deconstructive word.

Usually children are the most frequent target for negative criticism. One of the reasons is that they are defenseless and can't retaliate, like a boss, co-worker, spouse, or friend can. Sometimes children are treated this way because of the mounting frustration of the parent, grandparent, school teacher, coach or special interest instructor due to the child's conduct. One word of advice, think before you speak to anyone especially a child. Most of the time, whether you think the child deserves it or not, they just need to hear a kind word. (If this word of advice isn't subtle enough, try this the next time you want to vent on a child with words, pick on someone your own size. I am at your disposal.)

It isn't that we all haven't failed in this area, because we have. Chances are good that we'll fail in the future as well. But we should be mindful of the irreversible damage that can result because of thoughtlessly spoken words especially in a heated moment.

Why wouldn't we desire to share positive encouragement with our family and friends, or for that matter, even with a stranger? I am a strong disciplinarian so this subject is of particular interest to me. It is also a challenge of particular interest. Speaking words of encouragement is simple it's just not easy. But then, what discipline of virtue is?

Remember the right word at the right time, that's the goal. Maybe it's a "thank you" or "good job" or "I'm gonna' have a baby." On the other hand, it might be, "take the day off," or "that's ok, it happens to all of us from time to time," or "we made a mistake on your tax return, we owe you a \$1,000," or how about the one that is heard far too infrequently, "I'm sorry, please forgive me (that reminds me, I've got to go and apologize to my wife, so I'll sign off here)?" For edification and effective communication there is nothing like a word spoken in due season.