

Talking Christianly

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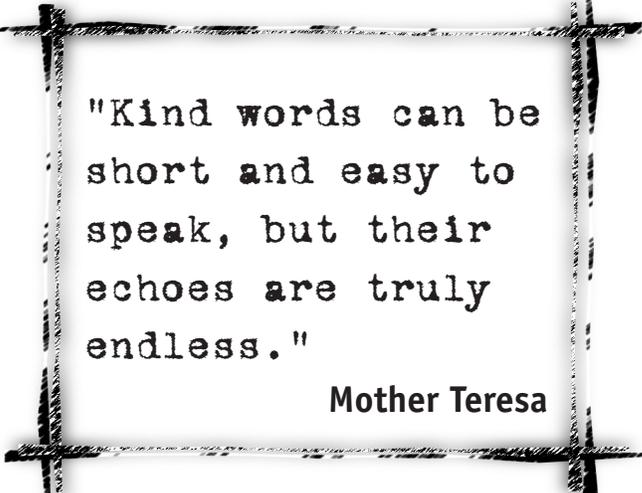


the Bible tells you how TO SPEAK CHRISTIANLY

Talking Christianly means to speak to others as Christ would. *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2*

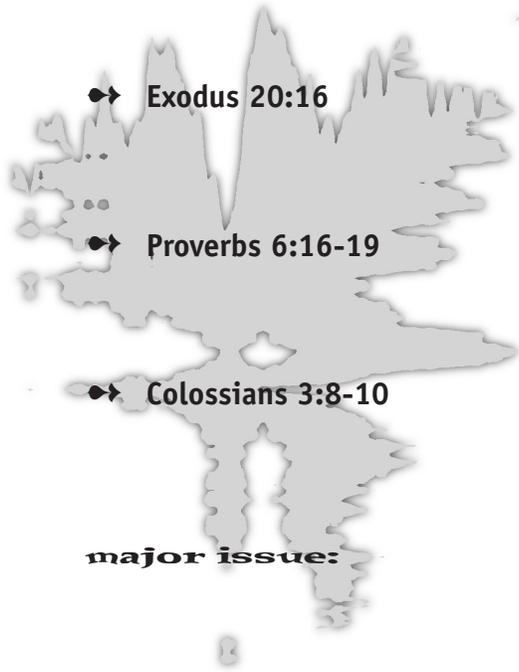
It means that your words and the attitudes attached to those words are filtered and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Write a few words to summarize all God's instructions in each passage. When you finish each group, label the major issue they are addressing. For example, "Don't Lie."



"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

Mother Teresa

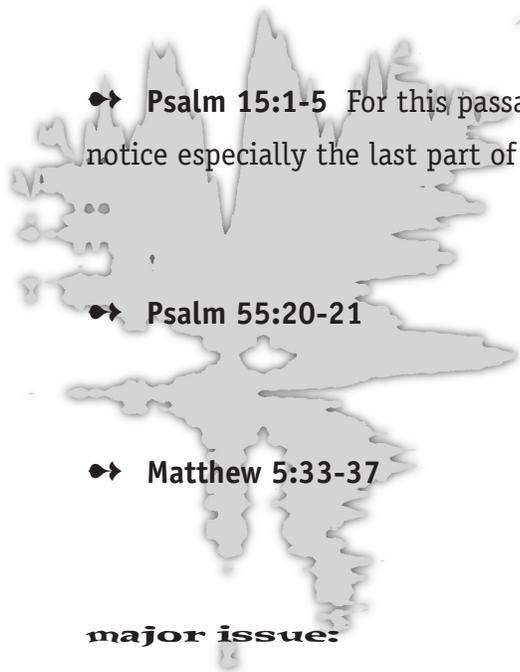


•→ Exodus 20:16

•→ Proverbs 6:16-19

•→ Colossians 3:8-10

major issue:

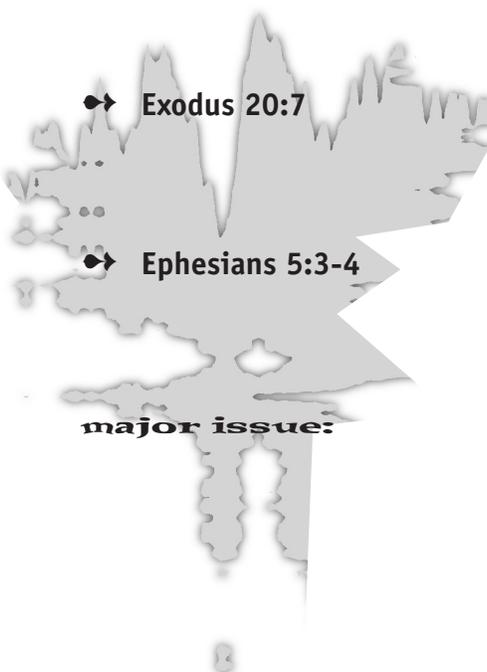


◆→ **Psalm 15:1-5** For this passage, make notes of all God's instructions, but notice especially the last part of verse 4.

◆→ **Psalm 55:20-21**

◆→ **Matthew 5:33-37**

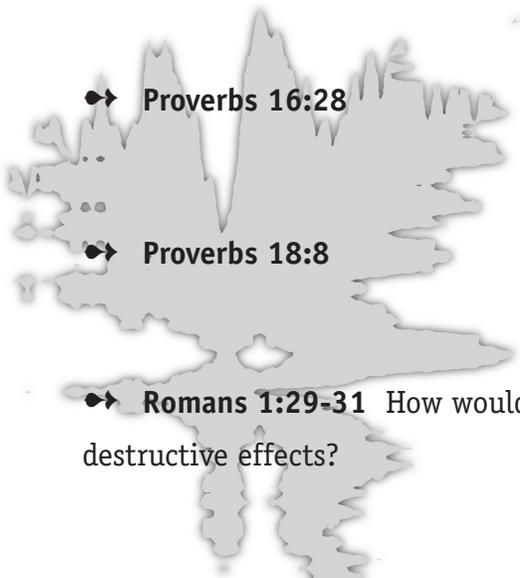
major issue:



◆→ **Exodus 20:7**

◆→ **Ephesians 5:3-4**

major issue:



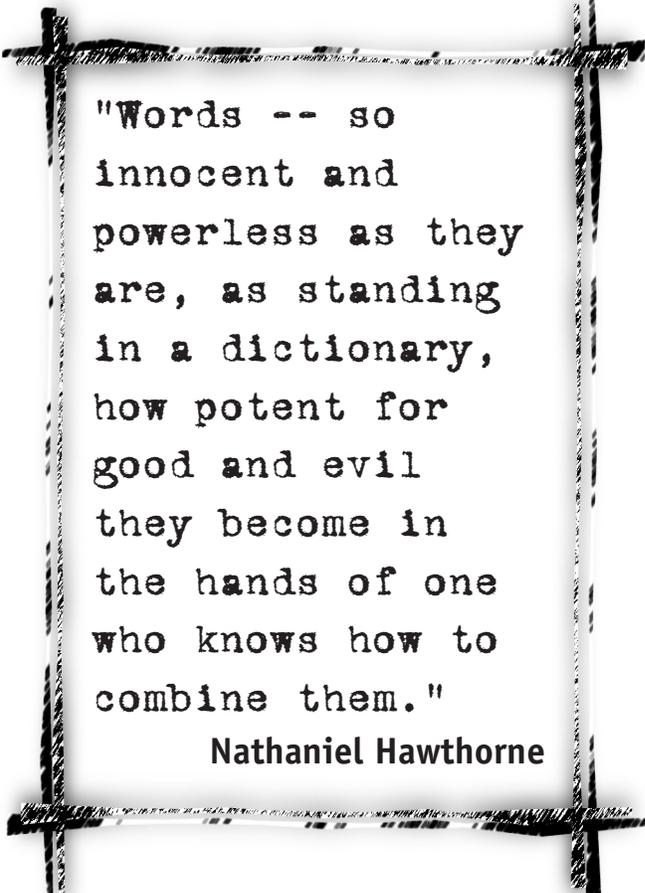
•→ Proverbs 16:28

•→ Proverbs 18:8

•→ Romans 1:29-31 How would you rate the evils on this list as to their destructive effects?

What does the inclusion of gossip and slander in this list say about what God thinks about them?

major issue:



"Words -- so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them."

Nathaniel Hawthorne

◆ Proverbs 21:19

◆ Proverbs 26:20-22

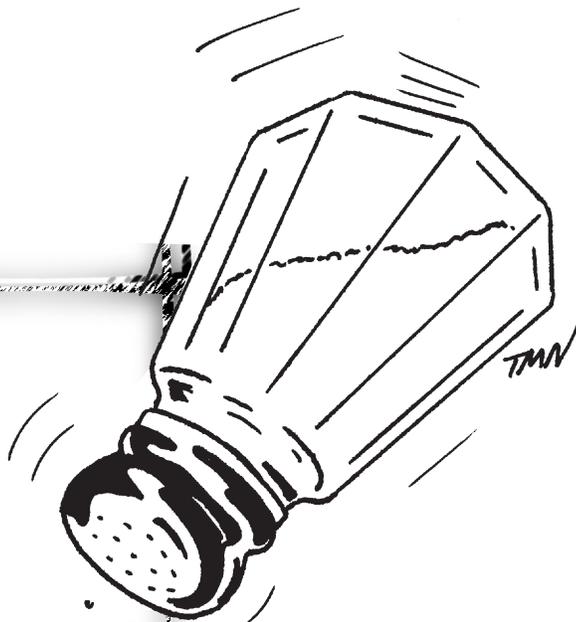
◆ 2 Timothy 2:23-24

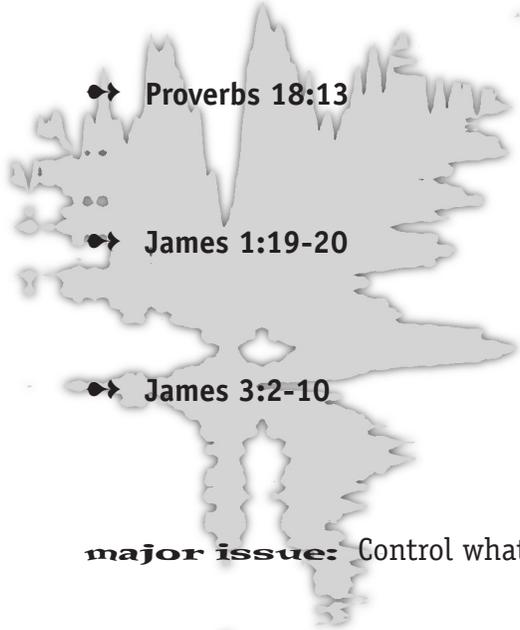
major issue:

Your words should not have to be taken with a grain of salt. You should salt them before they leave your mouth.

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:6



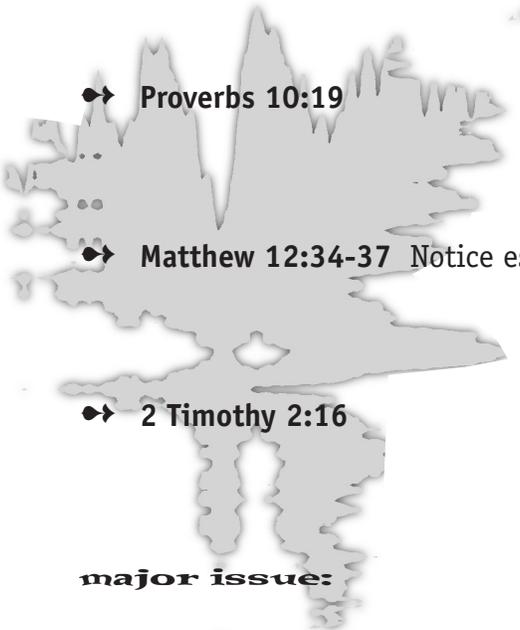


•→ Proverbs 18:13

•→ James 1:19-20

•→ James 3:2-10

major issue: Control what you say.



•→ Proverbs 10:19

•→ Matthew 12:34-37 Notice especially verse 36.

•→ 2 Timothy 2:16

major issue:

repentance for sinning

WITH YOUR WORDS

A CHECKLIST

Directions:

You need Christ to forgive you where you have used words in wrong ways. As you read each wrong use of words in the checklist on the next page, turn these verses and instructions into prayers to clean your conscience.



Make these steps into prayers:

1. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24*
2. Realize that what you have done is wrong and that you need to stop doing it. This is repentance.
3. Confess (or admit) the wrongs to God and ask for His forgiveness.
4. Ask Jesus to help you speak Christianly. Then cooperate with His help by yielding to His gentle nudges, "No, don't say that."
5. *Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. Psalm 141:3*
6. ... *I have resolved that my mouth will not sin. Psalm 17:3b*



THE CHECKLIST:

As God reveals where you have been wrong, ask His forgiveness for each one.

Slander and gossip -

Have you spoken negatively or critically of another? Have you said things about people you would not have said if they were present? Have you said things that would cause your hearer to think negatively about another person? Have you said anything that would hurt another person's reputation? Have you said something about someone with intent to hurt them? Have you listened to others speaking any of the above?

Lying - Have you purposely deceived someone? Have you tried to create an impression so that someone would believe something other than the complete truth? Have you been dishonest in action, word, or appearance?

Obscenity and coarse joking - Have you made jokes that undermine important areas of life such as birth, death, or sex? Have you made jokes that denigrate other races created by God? Have you been insensitive to others' needs because of joking around? Have you taken God's name in vain? Have you used foul language?

Unkind or hurtful words - Have you spoken words that hurt someone? Have you spoken in a way that demeaned someone or put them down?

Broken promises - Have you made commitments that you didn't fulfill? Have you said you would do something and then not done it at work or with your family and friends?

Impulsive or out-of-control speech - Have you spoken tactlessly and thoughtlessly? Have you spoken angry words you now regret? Do you think about the effect of your words before you say them?



Ask for forgiveness from those you have offended or hurt. If they do not know that you spoke wrongly about them, it would do more damage to tell them.

You may have been wounded by another's words. Even within the pain, forgive them. This act will lance the wound and allow healing to take place.



Pray something like this: Jesus, I forgive _____ for _____. I choose not to seek revenge and will not hold this against him/her. Instead, I turn him/her over to You. I ask You to bless him/her even though he/she cursed me. I open my wounded heart to Your healing love.

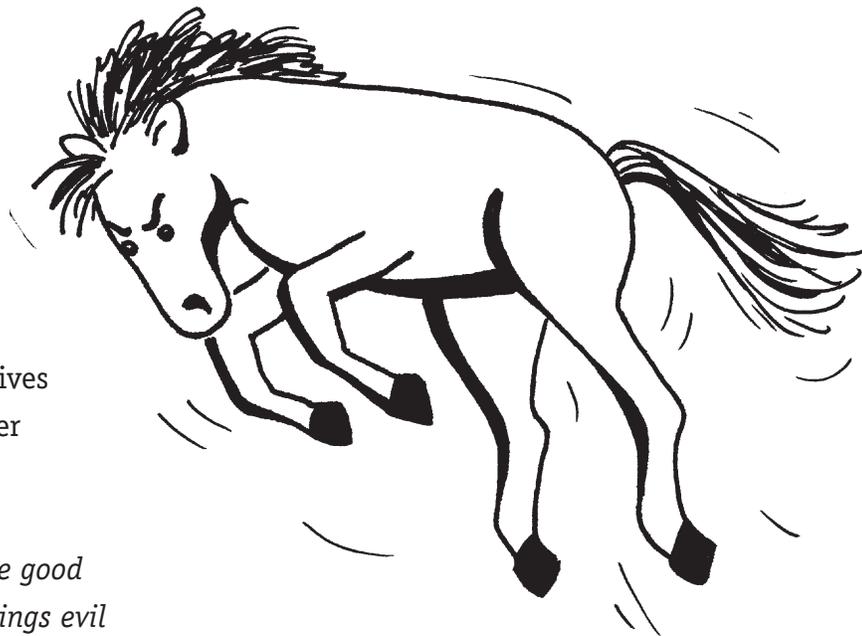
reining in THE TONGUE

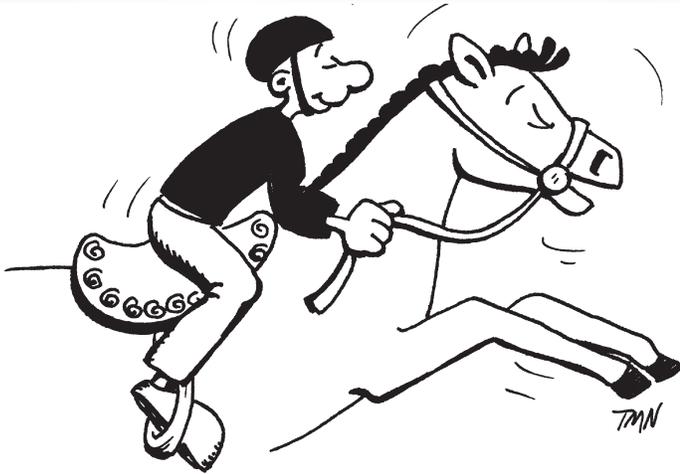
If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. James 1:26

To rein in your tongue, evaluate your motives and how you are thinking about the matter **before** you speak because ...

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. Luke 6:45

Use the following test to evaluate how you are thinking about a matter before you speak about it. If the thoughts and motives of your heart pass the test, you have reined in your tongue to follow Christ's guidelines.





A Test to Rein in the Tongue

Adapted from Bill Gothard, *Instructions for our Most Important Battle*, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts Supplementary Alumni Book vol. 2, 1976. Used with permission.

how you think is how you'll speak

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – **think about such things.** Philippians 4:8 (emphasis mine)*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Is it true? | Will it give an accurate impression? |
| 2. Is it noble? | Should it be imitated by others? |
| 3. Is it right? | Is it the right or appropriate thing to say at this time? |
| 4. Is it pure? | Is it motivated by the desire to feel important?
Is it motivated by a desire to build yourself up at the expense of another ? |
| 5. Is it lovely? | Will it encourage and enrich the lives of all who hear it? |
| 6. Is it admirable and will cause another to be esteemed? | Will it damage anyone's reputation? |
| 7. Is it excellent morally? | Will it motivate others to godly living? |
| 8. Is it praiseworthy? | Will it build up all who hear it? |

A prayer to pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14

Talking Christianly  11

what if I know something NEGATIVE ABOUT SOMEONE . . .

*A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.
A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.
Proverbs 11:13, 20:19*



should you say it?

- **Would you say it if he/she was listening?**
- **If you would, why are you saying it to this other person instead of saying it directly to the person involved?**
- **Generally, remain silent with negative information.**
- **If you have a relationship with the person in question, talk about the negative information to him/her only. See How to Deliver a Correction in this section.**
- **If the information must be given to someone besides the person involved, say it only to those who have the place of authority where they can do something about it.**
- **Don't allow negative information about a person to be included in prayer gatherings unless that person has given permission.**

*A psalm of David. LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?
(He who) has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman,...* Psalm 15:1,3



A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue. Proverbs 17:4

1. What is your heart motivation for listening to (or speaking) negative information about someone? Mark any one that applies and then repent.

- You want to feel superior or important.
- You want the approval of others so you listen or agree.
- You are curious about the private lives of others.
- You want to hear of the failures of others so you don't feel so bad about your own weaknesses.
- You want to feel you are on the "inside," having privileged information.

2. How do you stop hearing negative information? Be diligent in maintaining upright character.

- Look displeased that these things are being spoken. *As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue brings angry looks. Proverbs 25:23*
- Interrupt and say:
 - "I'd rather not hear this since I'm not directly involved."
 - "Do you feel I'm the one who can do anything about this knowledge?"
 - "She would be very hurt if she heard what you are saying."
 - "I'm not comfortable with this conversation."
 - "I can't listen to this information."
 - "Have you talked to (the person they are talking about) about your problem with him/her? You must talk to him/her first, according to Matthew 18, and not anyone else."



Pray that God will help you recognize gossip and slander. Pray that He will give you wisdom and strength to run from the temptation to gossip or listen to it.

*But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a **slanderer**, a drunkard or a swindler. **With such a man do not even eat.** 1 Corinthians 5:11 (emphasis mine)*

encouraging and BUILDING UP EACH OTHER

Read the following passages. Note beside each reference the types of words and their effect on people.

➔ Proverbs 15:4

➔ Proverbs 15:23

➔ Proverbs 15:30

➔ Proverbs 16:24

practical ways to encourage people Eulogies Are for the Living

- Give a compliment (not trite, but sincere).
Look for things you appreciate about them and tell them.
- Ask people how you could pray for them.
Then, pray with them, if they are comfortable with that.
- Highlight a character strength. "You seem to have a lot of self-control. I admire that."
- Ask God to show you the things He likes about others. Then, if it's OK with Him, tell them what He has shown you.
- Tell those you love, that you do.

*And let us consider
how we may spur one
another on toward love
and good deeds.*

*Let us not give up
meeting together, as
some are in the habit
of doing, but let us
encourage one another
– and all the more
as you see the Day
approaching.*

Hebrews 10:24-25

delivering A CORRECTION

Confrontation, or delivering a correction, can be a win-win situation. Approach it with the motive to see the person grow to develop his/her full potential in God. Do it with the person's best interests at heart. Keep an "equal value" mindset: you are both equally able to sin and equally able to access God's grace to change.

When a brother/sister sins against you, do this first:

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

Then ask:

- Is this a sin, or is this a difference between the two of you that you should overlook?
- Have you earned the right to speak into his/her life? Do you have a relationship where he/she would hear you?
- Will this issue hurt your relationship if you do not talk to him/her about it?
- Are you in authority or been given spiritual leadership over him/her? Then, delivering a correction is part of your job.
- Do you care enough to confront the person about the sin when it will make a difference? Sin that is not dealt with is destructive to people. Love does what is best for the other person. So, would it be in his/her best interest to be confronted honestly and kindly?

➡ **Read Matthew 18:15-17** to find out what to do next.

What is the order of events that is to take place when someone sins against you?

Who is the first person you should talk to about the offense?

What is the goal? (verse 15)

God's goal for all people is redemption and right relationship. Yours should be the same. Love means choosing what is best and bringing reconciliation. Sin has hurt you, but it is destructive to the other person, too. You don't want him/her to continue in destruction. You must forgive and then seek what is best for him/her.

If you are angry with someone or he/she has something against you, what should you do?

◆▶ **Read Matthew 5:21-24**

Where are the places or times when you *offer your gift at the altar*?

What is the goal? (verse 24)

◆▶ **Read Leviticus 19:17-18**

What is the condition in which your heart and motives are to be before and during a rebuke?
The motive for your rebuke should **not** be to _____.

How is it a loving choice to rebuke a brother who is sinning?

How would you share in his guilt by not confronting his sin?

◆▶ **Read James 5:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26.** Use them to add to your answers to the last two questions.

Your Attitude When Delivering a Correction

➡ **Read Galatians 6:1.** *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

What is the goal of confronting the sin?

What is the tone of the confrontation; **how** is it to be done?

The goal of confronting sin is always restoration and redemption. The confrontation should be done in a tone or an attitude of humility. **Humility means that you know that you are not invincible to temptation and you have the capacity to give in to it.** *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 1 Corinthians 10:12*

Humility means that you know you have had many specks and planks in your own eye and might have some even now. These cause blind areas and weak areas, possibly different than the person you are correcting, but no less potentially destructive. You need your brothers and sisters in Christ to help you see the faults you are blind to just as you are helping this person see his/hers. Next time it might be **you** that needs correcting.

Think carefully about the way **you** would want to be approached. Correct your brother or sister in that way.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Luke 6:41-42



Here are some ways to remove planks from your eye:

Assume the best.

Go to the person wanting to clarify the issue. Ask for his/her view of what happened. Start with the assumption that his/her motives were right. Give the person the benefit of the doubt especially if the situation is open to interpretation. Maybe you didn't read it right. Go to him/her with the attitude that you could be wrong. Go as a learner, not an accuser.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13:6-7

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment. John 7:24

Be on his/her side.

Go to the person with an attitude that communicates, "You are valued highly by God and by me. I am **for** you. You have a problem. Resolving it is in your best interest." You see what will trip him/her up, and you want to see him/her succeed.

Avoid the attitude that communicates, "You're guilty, you're all bad, you stand accused and condemned, your verdict is already decided." You are despising the person in your heart. You are out of touch with your own weaknesses and sin.

Do not go to the person in anger, vengefulness, or bitterness.

Forgive him/her, even if you are still hurt. Vent your anger non-destructively and alone (cry, hit a pillow, go for a jog, and so on). Turn the person over to God to deal with. When you talk to him/her, focus on the wrong done rather than on the person. Don't speak sharply, but quietly. Seek to hear the other side.

And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 2 Timothy 2:24

Don't act on gossip.

If the information you have received is from gossip or hearsay, **TREAD VERY CAREFULLY!** The person who was offended or who saw the sin should be the one to confront or get the facts straight from the offender. Try to get this to happen. Stop the gossiping immediately. If someone other than the one who saw the sin goes to the offender, much pain and feelings of betrayal can happen in conversations like, "It has been said that you..." ("Who said it and why didn't they come to **me** about it?")



Don't confront because it makes you feel good or powerful.

Pride is a very big log that usually blinds you from seeing it in yourself, though it is obvious to others. Ask God and others to show you its existence in your life, and repent. Ask God to help you feel His grief over your brother's/sister's sin. Then, go to him/her wanting him/her to be free **more than you want to be right.**

Do not listen to criticism of any leader.

Leaders are to be treated with respect and honor because of the position in which God has placed them. *Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm. Psalm 105:15* The one who is criticizing needs to respectfully give feedback to the leader alone or keep quiet and pray. If a leader needs to be confronted about sin or destructive habits, follow the guidelines in this section plus the following passages.

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning. 1 Timothy 5:1-2, 17-20

How to Deliver the Correction

Pray before correcting or confronting.

Pray for God to search your own motives and help you to have the right ones.

Pray that you will feel the same grief and pain God feels over sin and broken relationships. If it doesn't hurt you to bring the correction, it will hurt the other person.

Pray that God will help him/her to be receptive and willing to change. Pray for his/her restoration and growth as much as you pray that he/she sees the error of his/her ways.

Pray that communication will be clear and accurate.

Make this passage into a prayer asking for God's help: *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:2-3*

Go to the person privately, not publicly.

Get the facts straight.

Go to him/her asking for clarification and his/her perspective. Check out rumors for their validity. Rebuke gossips. *The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him. Proverbs 18:17*

Don't save up all your complaints and problems and then dump it on the person.

When you have a problem with something someone is doing, clear the air immediately and face to face.

Confront only what the person can change.

Speak to one issue at a time. Don't overload the person with a long list of issues.

Tell WHAT the other person is doing that causes the problem.

Be specific. Let the person know exactly what the offense is. Don't be vague. Be honest and kind. *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15*

Tell HOW it makes you feel (if applicable).

If you are offended, hurt, betrayed, tell the person.

Tell WHY this is important to you.

The person's witness is being compromised; your relationship with him/her is important to you and it is being damaged; you don't want this wrong action to destroy him/her.

Don't keep repeating it once you have made your point.

Let the person express negative feelings without you getting defensive.

Be humble and, in your heart, try to imagine how you would feel given the same situation. *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32* But it may make you mad first.

The person affected may feel shock, bitterness, and resentment. He/she may not spare your feelings by hiding behind a stiff upper lip. Whatever he/she says, he/she won't be ready to listen to the reason this is happening to him/her until his/her emotions have been expressed and there has been time to swallow the hurt.

Listen carefully and ask clarifying questions.

This shows you are trying to understand the other person's position.

Indicate the desired action.

Deal only with actions the person can change. If you ask the person to do something he/she is unable to do, frustration builds in your relationship.

Avoid sarcasm.

Sarcasm signals that you are angry with the person rather than upset about the actions. This may cause him/her to resent you.

Avoid words like "always" and "never."

They usually detract from accuracy and make people defensive.

Avoid coming across as patronizing or condescending.

Remember your own potential for sin and blindness.

Don't apologize for the confrontational meeting.

Doing so detracts from it and may indicate you are not sure you had the right to say what you did.

Put the issue in the past.

Never bring it up again unless the problem reoccurs or you use it to affirm positive change and growth. Don't harbor a grudge.

It is not your responsibility to change anyone.

If the person does not respond to your loving, humble confrontation and does not do the changes you present, you are responsible to pray for him/her. But don't get angry or offended because he/she doesn't do what you believe to be best for him/her. Sometimes it takes time for people to see the same things you see that need to change. Think how patient God is in waiting for you to see the light.

how to RECEIVE CORRECTION

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Proverbs 27:5-6

Listen in humility. Mark the words in the following passage that show what you will gain. *He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding. Proverbs 15:31-32*

Don't get defensive and point out (or think about) his/her faults.

If you don't see what he/she sees in your life, or the correction doesn't bring "peace," DO NOT assume he/she is wrong. Instead, pray diligently for the Lord to show you what part of the input, or all of it, reveals needed change in your life. *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:11*

Seek correction. Be open to it. Be teachable.

Mark the words in the following passages that show what you will gain by being open to correction.

Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. Proverbs 9:7-9

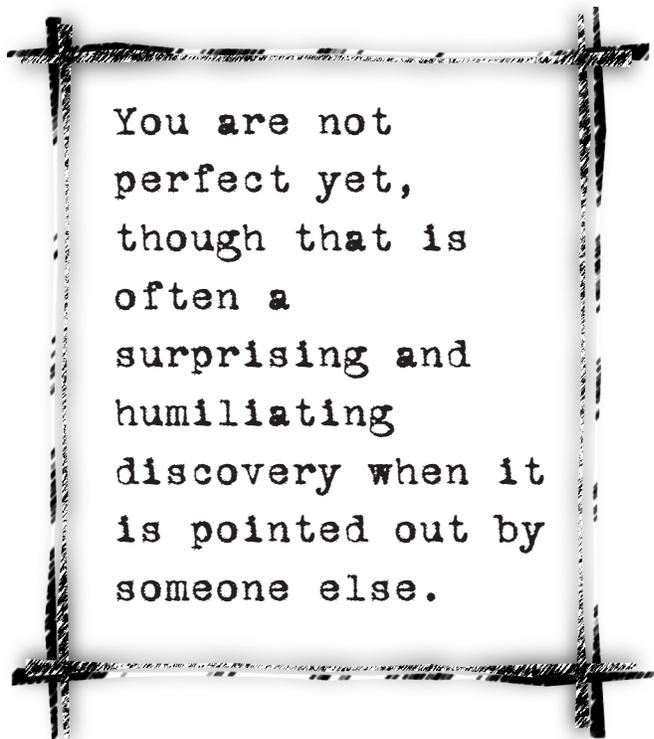
Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid. Proverbs 12:1

Sources

Bill Gothard, *Instructions for our Most Important Battle*, Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts Supplementary Alumni Book, vol. 2, 1976.

Harvey Herman, National Field Representative, Atlantic Coast, Washington D. C.

Dick Schroeder, University Christian Fellowship (Chi Alpha) at Montana State University, Bozeman.



list of SCRIPTURES

➔ General References

Exodus 20:7	the name of Lord misused
Exodus 20: 16	don't lie
Leviticus 19:16	don't slander, rebuke frankly, don't seek revenge
Psalm 15:1-5	speaks truth, no slander or slur, keeps oath
Psalm 19:14	may words and meditation be pleasing to God
Psalm 34:12-13	love life so don't speak evil or lies
Psalm 55:20-21	violate covenant, smooth speech but sword
Psalm 141:3	set guard over my mouth
Proverbs 4:23-24	guard heart, keep away corrupt talk
Proverbs 6: 16-19	seven things Lord hates: lies, dissension
Proverbs 10:19	many words, sin not absent
Proverbs 13:3	guard lips, guard soul, speak rashly, ruin
Proverbs 15:1	gentle answer turns away wrath
Proverbs 15:4	tongue brings healing, or crushes spirit
Proverbs 15:23	how good is a timely and apt reply
Proverbs 15:28	righteous weighs answers, mouth of wicked evil
Proverbs 15:30	good news is health to bones
Proverbs 16:28	perverse man stirs up dissension, gossip separates friends
Proverbs 17:4	wicked listens to evil and malicious tongue
Proverbs 17:28	fool thought to be wise if keeps silent
Proverbs 18:6	fool's lips bring strife, mouth invites beating.
Proverbs 18:7	fool's mouth his undoing
Proverbs 18:8, 26:22	gossip like choice morsels; go down to inmost parts.
Proverbs 18:13	answers before listening-- his folly
Proverbs 18:21	tongue has power of life and death
Proverbs 19:5	false witness will not go unpunished
Proverbs 20:19	gossip betrays confidence; avoid man who talks too much.
Proverbs 21:19	Better to live in desert than with quarrelsome wife.
Proverbs 21:23	guards his mouth keeps himself from calamity.
Proverbs 26:20-22	gossip kindles strife
Proverbs 29:20	man speaks in haste? more hope for fool

Matthew 5:33-37 don't break oath, don't swear, let yes be yes
Matthew 12:34-37 out of heart mouth speaks; account for careless words
Romans 1:29-31 list of sins including gossip, slander
Romans 16:17-18 keep away from those who cause divisions with flattery

Ephesians 4:25 don't lie
Ephesians 4:29 do not let unwholesome talk come out of mouths, but for building others

Ephesians 4:31-32 get rid of bitterness, rage, slander, Be kind, forgiving
Ephesians 5:4 no obscenity, foolish talk, but thanksgiving.
Ephesians 5:19-20 speak to one another with psalms, hymns, thanks

Colossians 3: 8-10 no rage, slander, filth, lies
1 Timothy 4: 12 set example in speech
1 Timothy 5:11-13 younger widows not take vows of celibacy, become idle gossips
2 Timothy 2:16 avoid godless chatter
2 Timothy 2:23-24 Lord's servant must not quarrel; be kind, not resentful.

James 1:19-20 quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry
James 1:26 keep a tight rein on tongue or religion worthless
James 3:2-10 rein in the tongue
Revelation 21:8 liars in lake of fire

➔ Delivering a correction

Leviticus 19:17-18 rebuke neighbor, don't share in his sin
Proverbs 9:7-9 don't rebuke mocker, instruct the wise
Proverbs 12:1 love discipline, love knowledge, to hate correction is stupid
Proverbs 15:31-32 wise if listen to rebuke
Proverbs 18:17 first to present case seems right till another speaks
Proverbs 27:5-6 better open rebuke than hidden love
Isaiah 58:9-10 no pointing finger, malicious talk

Matthew 18:15-17 when brother sins, go to him
Matthew 5:21-24 if broken relationship, leave offering and make things right first

John 7:24	stop judging by appearances, make right judgment
Galatians 6:1	brother sin, restore gently, watch self
Ephesians 4:2-3	keep unity
Ephesians 4:15	speaking truth in love
1 Timothy 5:1-2, 17-20	how to rebuke a leader
2 Timothy 2:25-26	gently instruct opposers so they escape devil's trap
James 5:19-20	turn brother from sin