

**Read: Ephesians 4:29-5:2**

## You Can Make a Difference

### **Ephesians 4:29**

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.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Have you heard that before? It’s been around a long time. In fact, this rhyme was first written in 1872. Since then, for over 150 years, kids have said it to let others know that their mean words don’t really bother them.

There’s another phrase that’s kind of like it: “I’m rubber, you’re glue, whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you.”

What do both of those phrases have in common? Each one is a big fat lie. Words do hurt. The mean things people say don’t actually bounce right off, but too often stick like glue in our brains.

God knows that your heart will hurt because of what other people say and do. Because it hurts to hear “Nobody likes a know-it-all” or “We don’t want you to play with us at recess” or “Why are you so stupid?” or “You aren’t funny.”

For people who believe in Jesus, God wants you to be different and make a difference in other people’s lives. That’s why he tells you to only say things that are helpful. You can build people up by saying things like, “Thanks for being a great friend.” Or, “Do you need my help?” Or, “Hey, are you okay? Want to talk?” Or, “That was really nice. Thank you!”

God doesn’t want us to only encourage with our words, we get to let our actions speak as well. We choose to be kind, helping our friends when they need it. We have compassion, seeing when someone is hurting and helping them by listening and showing them we care. We forgive people who sin against us. We choose to love people the same way that Jesus loved us.

Words can hurt, but words can heal too. Choose your words wisely.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What are some nice things people have said to you?
- What's a nice thing you can say to one of your friends?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Identify a friend who needs cheering up. What ways can you do that?
- Why does God want you to speak and act kindly to others? Read Ephesians 5:1-2.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Think of your friend group. Which of them really listens to you and makes you feel good? Tomorrow, make it a point to thank them for being such a good friend.
- Being kind and cheerful is important around your home. Discuss with your family how you can better support each other with a cheerful attitude and kind words.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Holy Spirit, you live inside of me, so work in me so that my words are helpful. Get rid of my anger and fighting. Help me be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. Give me the strength to walk in the way of love, just like Jesus loves me. Amen.