

21st Century Men of Grace:

Sound Speech: Healthy Communications in a Unhealthy World Titus 2:8

As we open to Titus 2:8 we are turning to the final quality God has expressed that He desires to see in every young man in Christ's Church. Amazingly, the final quality is about the type of communication that a young man cultivates for life.

Paul said, encouragingly exhort those young men to have healthy communication, healthy words and feelings that they express before a watching world. Those words must stand the test of a world that measures what you say against who you say you are, if those two don't match, they will have something evil to say about us as God's representatives.

God is vitally interested in your health this morning. He wants us to have healthy doctrine, faith, and love: which He explains in v.2 at the start of this list of qualities desired in all men.

And now at the very end of the 12 qualities of 21st Century Men of Grace God again uses healthy to describe the way men communicate. We could sum up this final quality by saying that:

21st Century Men of Grace Need to Communicate Healthy Words

This next verse in our study of **21st Century Men of Grace**, contains the final request God makes of every young man in Christ's church. Please follow along as we read the entire passage to the younger men:

*Titus 2:6-8 (NKJV) Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 **sound speech that cannot be condemned**, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

There is our goal in God's Word today: understanding God's desire for our sound, healthy speech, wholesome talking, and good communication.

Are you a healthy, or sound communicator?

God says that we must attend to our spiritual health needs as young people.

Young men, teens, college-aged men, young married men, single-career men, young dads: do you have healthy speech, formed by communication habits that are pleasing to God?

Healthy communication is defined so clearly by God's Word.

Is your speech mixed with grace, is your tongue guarded by the Spirit?

Do your words come from a pure heart and a sound mind with no room for foolish, coarse, or off-color words?

Is your tongue a conduit for the wisdom that is from above, so that most of all, your speech pleases Christ Jesus?

Make Choices Today That Lead to Healthy Words

In these verses we have read, Paul asks Titus to gently exhort every young man in Christ's Church to guard their tongues. And much like Isaiah, to get their mouth purified, and then to keep all communications from then on healthy and pleasing to God.

Look back at that word "sound" in v. 8. This word is ***hugei***, an adjective form of a verb we have seen several times already in Titus. The verb ***hugaino*** (Strong's # 5198) is always used in reference to "sound" or healthy, correct, orthodox doctrine. We can see this word in Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2.

But the adjective ***hugei*** (Strong's # 5199) is used 11 x in the New Testament (Matthew 12:13; 15:31; Mark 5:34; John 5:6, 9, 11, 14, 15; 7:23; Acts 4:10; and Titus 2:8). This use in Titus 2:8 is the only time this word is used for communication; all the other ten times it is used in the Scriptures it is an adjective that describes people who have been healed. It is almost as if God is saying that we need God to make our communication healthy. We as sinners are sick in the communications department, and every other department for that matter. Only a Divine touch can restore us to speech that pleases God.

This verse is an urgent plea to all young men: surrender your speech to the control of God. Have a mouth that is a river of life giving words, that encourages and builds others up rather than pollutes and damages them.

Why would Paul stress that young men need to guard their talk, and keep it pleasing to God? Because there was such a temptation to be squeezed into godless, empty, and worldly communication, that is displeasing to God.

Paul had already written in depth about this to the church that Timothy was pasturing. Remember that Titus was ministering on Crete, and Timothy was pasturing at Ephesus.

Here is what Paul wrote to Ephesus about the dangers of getting squeezed into the godless communication mode. Open with me to Ephesians 4:15 where Paul begins to point out a clear path to avoid. Paul describes both the unhealthy communication that we all are so capable of producing; and the grace-prompted usage of our tongues, and the healthy communication that pleases God. Our goal should always be to have:

Grace-Restrained Communication

Ephesians 4:15 but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— [Healthy Communications are: true and loving]

Ephesians 4:22 that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, **the old man** which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. [Healthy Communications start with repentance (put off) and renewal (put on).]

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, **putting away lying**, “Let each one of you speak truth **[imperative]** with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. [Healthy Communications are truth based]

Ephesians 4:29 **Let no [imperative] corrupt word proceed out of your mouth**, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and **evil speaking be put away [imperative] from you**, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. [Healthy Communications are: guarded from corrupting elements and any evil content]

Ephesians 5:4 **neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks**. [Healthy Communications are: carefully screened so that no impurity is transmitted]

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you **with empty words**, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. [Healthy Communications are: words filled with God, not emptiness]

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather **expose [imperative]** them. [Healthy Communications are: spoken against worldliness]

Ephesians 5:12 For **it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret**. [Healthy Communications are never comfortable talking about filth]

Ephesians 5:19 **speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 **giving thanks** always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [Healthy Communications are Word-filled and thanks-filled]

Ephesians 6:9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, **giving up threatening**, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. [Healthy Communications are gentle]

Ephesians 6:19 and for me, that **utterance may be given to me**, that I may **open my mouth boldly** to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; **that in it I may speak boldly**, as I ought to speak. [Healthy Communications are emboldened by the Lord]

These 11 passages and verses form what we could describe as a:

Healthy Communication Manual

Ephesians 4-6 has perhaps the longest list of do's and don'ts for the words and communication of believers who want to please God in what they say. There are many other passages about the tongue, speaking, and communicating correctly. But there verses in Ephesians 4-6 are all about the results of godly living choices based upon the doctrine of salvation.

As in other Epistles, Paul starts with doctrine and then builds off that doctrine the basics for practical applications in daily life. So, Ephesians 1-3 is doctrinal and 4-6 is practical, very practical.

Paul explains to this church in Ephesus, and outward to all who through the centuries have read this inspired letter, that we are to make choices to please God in the way we talk.

On a negative note God says to keep healthy communications there are 7 areas to avoid: in 4:22 the old ways; in 4:25 lying; in 4:29-31 corrupt and evil speaking; in 5:4 filthiness, foolishness; in 5:6 empty words; in 5:12 shameful things; and in 6:9 threatening.

On the positive side God says healthy communications are built upon these four areas that show godly elements: in 4:15 truth mixed with love; in 5:11 holiness that exposes wickedness in daily life; in 5:19 worship words that lead to thanksgiving; and in 6:19 a boldness in using our words to build up, encourage, point others to the Lord, lead to thanksgiving and that are truth-filled.

Our Communications

Reveal our Maturity

Personal spiritual growth among individuals is the greatest need in our church today.

In our 21st century culture, we are seeing too many churches filled with immature believers. That is exactly what the writer of Hebrews warned us in 5:11-14:

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. NIV

God desires every young man to heed Paul, and turn the spotlight of your attention to the cultivation and control of the hardest member of the body to control, according to James--our tongue.

If James¹ could reduce the purpose of his letter down to only two words, they would be "Spiritual maturity".

One look at the problems James covers in this short letter says it all. As a pastor he was dealing with childhood illnesses. He is writing and exhorting them about the five marks of childish and immature believers. Each chapter of the Book of James reflects one mark of spiritual immaturity, have you noticed them?

1. Spiritual babes are IMPATIENT WITH THE TROUBLES OF LIFE (1:1-4)
2. Spiritual babes are QUICK TO TALK BUT SLOW TO LIVE THE TRUTH (2:14ff)
3. Spiritual babes HAVE AN OUT OF CONTROL TONGUE (3:1ff)
4. Spiritual babes are OFTEN BICKERING AND JEALOUS (4:1ff)
5. Spiritual babes are BUSY COLLECTING MATERIAL "TOYS" (5:1ff)

Then James gives clear indicators of how the walk of faith is going. You are headed toward Christian maturity when these areas are in line:

1. A Mature Walk of Faith endures troubles 1:2-11
2. A Mature Walk of Faith deals with temptation 1:12-16
3. A Mature Walk of Faith obeys the Word 1:17-27
4. A Mature Walk of Faith allows no prejudice 2:1-13.
5. A Mature Walk of Faith displays itself in godly works 2:14-26.
6. A Mature Walk of Faith Bridles the tongue 3:1-12

Remember that it has been estimated that from the first "Good morning" to the last "Good night," the average person's words could make a book of 50-60 pages-the equivalent of more than one hundred books a year of 200 pages each.

¹ 980118AM James 3:1-12

We must always remember that:

Satan's Goal is to Infect our Communication

Right after James' discussion of the tongue in 3:2 and 6, he explains in v. 15-16 that our motivation for what we say can either come from below (Satan's realm) or above (God's realm). We can tell where the words emanated from by the results of our words and actions. Note his warning in James 3:15-16:

This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there (NKJV).

Whenever what we say causes this list of woes from James 3:15-16: "jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, envy and every evil practice" God hasn't prompted our words. We are not walking in the Spirit. We are not energized by His grace.

Healthy communication is not merely vital, it must be always guarded or it can also become volatile. It was Washington Irving who first stated "The tongue is the only cutting tool that grows sharper by constant use."

He actually was only mirroring the words of James, the first New Testament letter. Listen to what the pastor of the First Church of Jerusalem, James the brother of Jesus, says to his congregation (3:6-8):

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. NKJV

Beware of Unhealthy Communication

James goes on in v. 17-18 to frame the work of grace in our lives that God desires. We all should be asking of the Lord on a daily, then on a moment-by-moment basis for His control of our tongues. This is what the thoughts, words, and deeds of everyone who wants to please the Lord should look like:

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (NKJV).

To avoid being an unsuspecting tool in the hands of the devil, be sure that what you say is made up of: absolutely **pure** words, words that lead to **peaceable** responses, **gentle** words, words that don't hammer people but are **willing to yield**, and words that are **full of mercy**.

This is God's desire for your words before you say them—but if your words are less than this, you will severely lessen your ministry effectiveness as a godly Titus 2 man!

What is the antidote to bad habits of saying words that do the work of the Devil? Turn to the middle of your Bible, and find the 141st Psalm. Make sure that some of the most crucial verses about regulating your tongue are marked, highlighted, and on the list of verses you really want to memorize.

God's desire for each of us is that we all make Psalm 141:3-4 a habit; and each of us is to pause before we speak and be sure that we set a guard at the door of our mouth.

*Psalm 141:3-4 **Set a guard, O LORD**, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies.*

Now slip back to Psalm 39, where David is even more to the point. Here is what we all should cry to God:

*Psalm 3:1 (NKJV) I said, "I will guard my ways, **Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle**, While the wicked are before me."*

David was the man after God's own heart because he was willing to surrender his words to the Lord! David asked God to muzzle his mouth, guard his tongue, and use his words. Think about it, David's words in the Psalms are some of the most useful words in the world. That is what happens with a guarded, muzzled, and surrendered tongue!

Let Jesus Give us Soundness of Speech

Jesus is the One who offers each of us a second chance, a new beginning in serving Him. Perhaps the clearest speech-repair job is captured in Isaiah 6, turn there with me and see the transformation of ISAIAH: THE DIRTY TONGUED.

Isaiah 6:1-13 (NKJV) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! **Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;** For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew

to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 **And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."** 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me.

Back to Titus 2:8. Do you remember the word "sound" that word is only used in the New Testament to describe a person that was healed, a body that was restored and made whole. That is what Paul is asking every young man to consider.

Jesus Wants to Heal our Communications

If you have never done so, I would encourage every young man today to ask for the Lord to cleanse your mouth, to purge you of any communication habits that displease Him and to decide to follow God's desires and be a young man with sound speech.

Healthy words, and healthy communications bring life to those who hear.

So what should we avoid? Never use our mouth in an un-regenerated way! What should we do? Tame our tongue by the Holy Spirit as His Word richly dwells and permeates all our lives. Why not like David, make some plans now to change our usage of our tongues?

Here are three great ways to change:

- **Think first:** before starting to say something pause a few seconds and ask are these words--true or false; exaggerated or accurate; healing or cutting; grateful or complaining?
- **Talk less:** it is a biblical fact that the less you talk the wiser you appear. Plan, prepare, concentrate and enrich each opportunity to speak. Make each a time to speak as 1 Peter 4:11: If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. NKJV
- **Start now:** like David (Psalm 141:3), ask God to fit you for a word retainer, get braces put on that tongue. Don't waste your greatest tool. Like Isaiah, ask God to cleanse your mouth so that it becomes a conduit for only healthy communications.

APPENDIX:

So what can we do with these tongues?

1. SPEAK GOD'S WORD: [Joshua 1:8](#) "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. NKJV
2. CONFESS OUR SINS: [Psalm 32:3-5](#) When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah NKJV
3. SHARE WHAT GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE: [Psalm 77:12](#) I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds. NKJV
4. PRAISE GOD: [Luke 1:64](#) Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. NKJV
5. CONFESS JESUS: [Romans 10:9-10](#) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. NKJV
6. SAY HEALTHY WORDS: [Ephesians 4:29](#) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. NKJV
7. BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS: [1 Peter 3:9](#) not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. NKJV

Jesus explains how important our words are. Look at Matthew 12:34:

"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks . NKJV

The window on the soul is the mouth. All that lies within is reflected by our words. What can our words show? These are the byproducts of an un-regenerated heart:

1. CURSES: [Psalm 10:7](#) His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness. NASB
2. HATRED: [Psalm 109:3](#) They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, And fought against me without a cause. NKJV
3. PERVERSITY [Proverbs 6:12](#) A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; NKJV
4. LIES [Proverbs 12:22](#) Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight. NKJV
5. FOOLISHNESS: [Proverbs 15:2](#) The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth Foolishness. NKJV
6. EVIL [Proverbs 15:28](#) The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. NASB

7. FLATTERY: [Proverbs 26:28](#) A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin. NKJV
8. IDLE WORDS: [Matthew 12:36](#) "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. NKJV
9. GOSSIP: [Romans 1:28-30](#) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, NKJV
10. CORRUPT (ROTTEN or CUTTING) WORDS: [Ephesians 4:29](#) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. NKJV

LYING: THE PROHIBITION Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, (NKJV)

LYING: THE WAYS:² The human mind seemingly knows no end to its creativity when it comes to rationalizing conduct. This capacity is only exceeded by the creation of deceptions and lies.

1. SLANDER is lying about another's character or conduct. Thomas Watson the Puritan divine wrote- "The scorpion carries his poison in his tail, the slanderer carries his in his tongue. Jesus was assaulted on many occasions by His enemies. But today Christians are guilty of much the same when they willingly share evil reports about fellow believers that are true! God says to not speak evil unless we are in the admonishment and edification mode to the person themselves! James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. (NKJV)
2. GOSSIP: Gossip is the voluntary sharing of information, true or untrue, that is damaging to the reputation of the one referred to. Often even truth gets so mixed up in the mind of the hearer that it is false when it finally slips out of the mouth of the hearer. Here God's Word must be taken to heart. "Do not go about spreading slander among your people.... I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:16). ". . . a gossip separates close friends" (Proverbs 16:28). "He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends" (Proverbs 17:9). "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts" (Proverbs 18:8). "Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down" (Proverbs 26:20). This dangerous habit of gossip is often prefaced with: "don't tell anyone but . . .", or "did you hear . . .", or "I'm not sure but . . .", or "did any of you hear that . . ." and the most insidious "please pray with me about . . .".

² R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 159.

3. FLATTERY: Among the subtlest forms of deceit is flattery, which someone has cleverly defined as "saying things to a person's face that you would never say behind his back!" 1 Thessalonians 2:5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness -- God is witness. (NKJV) Flattery does not come from love for that person, but rather from a love for self that wants to be noticed or perhaps ingratiated to the one being flattered. Elihu ominously spoke against this when he said, "I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away" (job 32:21, 22). God's people must avoid flattery just as the Apostle Paul and the writer of Proverbs averred: "You know we never used flattery" (1 Thessalonians 2:5); "do not associate with one who flatters with his lips" (Proverbs 20:19, NKJV).
4. EXAGGERATION: Playful exaggeration in story-telling - embellishing a story to entertain others - is not forbidden. But exaggerating one's work, as is so common in Christian ministry - making God's work more glorious or more "successful" than it is - is sin. Pretending that something is more wonderful than it is falls under the same condemnation.
5. CARELESSNESS: Many people become "chronically inaccurate" in what they say. They do not lie deliberately but carelessly. For this reason Dr. Samuel Johnson, advised: "Accustom your children... constantly to this; if a thing happened at one window and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation of the truth will end. The lazy lie is a sign of moral stagnation!
6. TRUE WORDS: Even true statements can be employed to deceive others. In the oft retold example - as a ship's first mate so well understood. It seems that the first mate had been derelict in his duties and had been disciplined by the ship's captain. But a few days later he got his revenge when the captain became ill, and the first mate assumed running the ship - and the keeping of the ship's log. His opening entry that day began, "Captain sober today . . ." Perfectly true - and a perfect deception in what it implied!
7. INSINUATION: Satan's slander of job is instructive. His method involved an insinuating question: "Does job fear God for nothing?" (job 1:9). The enemy did not plainly slander job as a believer who followed God for what he could get. He slyly raised the question - a grievous slander. This is so easy to do. "Is John really that smart?" "Why would Joe do that?" Insinuating questions are slippery libels on others. Those attacked are defenseless and the attackers unassailable - in this world!

