The Correspondent

COLLINSVILLE – TROY
CHURCH OF CHRIST
Focus. Find. Follow.

SUNDAY
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM
Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM
www.collinsville-troycoc.org
(618) 667-6708

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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The Fruit of Our Lips

-Renn Ferguson

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me." This phrase originated about the mid to late 1800's. It generally means that words cannot cause physical pain therefore, any hateful or angry word spoken to us should be discarded. While to an extent this is true, I think we all understand how powerful our words can be. James describes the power of our words as a rudder that controls a ship or a bit that controls a horse (James 3:3-5). He is, of course, making the point that our words are extremely powerful. This is a teaching that we see throughout the New Testament. Controlling our tongue is perhaps the most difficult thing for any of us to do. As James said, "For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body." (James 3:2, ESV). Though it may be difficult we cannot use that as an excuse to say whatever we want.

Christ spoke very grave words in Matthew 12:33-37, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Christ says that our words give others a glance into our hearts. We should think about that the next time we want to complain about someone or something. Or, the next time we are tempted to gossip about others. We may feel as though we are building ourselves up but in reality we are showing what is in our hearts. As Jesus said it is by these words that we will be condemned. That should give us the drive to put aside all of the evil that proceeds out of our mouths and begin speaking righteously.

Paul wrote, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." (Ephesians 4:29) Let those of us who follow Christ use our words not to tear down one another but to build up. Not to slander but support, not to discourage but encourage, not to curse but to bless one (James 3:9-12).