

Double Date with Mark and Jill

The Power of Our Words

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Jill Savage: Welcome to this month's Double Date with Mark and Jill. This month, we are looking at "The Power of Our Words," and we're going to actually start by opening up God's Word and taking a look at what He has to say about the power of our words.

Mark Savage: The first verse that I'm going to read is Proverbs 12:18-19, "There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment."

JS: Wow. Alright, Proverbs 13:3 tells us, "Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin."

MS: It reminds me of people who just open up, and start flapping their mouth, and it brings ruin. Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

JS: Proverbs 16:24 tells us, "Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."

MS: Proverbs 18:21, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."

JS: Such a reminder. Alright, Matthew 12:36-37, "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." It's pretty strong words.

MS: Yup. In Proverbs 21:23, it says this, "Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from trouble."

JS: Ephesians 4:29, "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."

MS: That's powerful. James 1:26, "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless."

JS: And then, finally, Psalm 19:14 tells us, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." And that's, honestly, just a few of the chapters and verses in the Bible where God talks about our words. I mean, He talks about our them a lot.

MS: And so, obviously, our words can bring healing, are powerful, and that power can be used positively or destructively.

JS: And I would say that, for us, when I think about our marriage before crisis and our marriage after crisis, we both have made a lot of changes in how we use our words.

MS: Absolutely, we have.

JS: And I think it goes both ways. We've changed using our words well when we speak up. One of the places that you really had to grow was to actually speak up, because you would keep everything in, and you would sulk on the inside, and you've had to use your God-tool of courage to speak up. So, using those words, finding them, and then using them. There have been times I've had to learn how to speak up as well and use my words well. For instance, asking for what I need instead of being frustrated that he can't read my mind. But, I think the other way is, we probably also use less words with each other, particularly less critical words.

MS: I think, for me, it was a foundational transition for me to take my thoughts captive. To stop and think through what it is that I'm wanting to say, instead of just yapping, and talking, and letting everything run out of my mouth without any forethought.

JS: And recognizing that sometimes those negative words come out of us because they start with thoughts.

MS: Oh, absolutely.

JS: So, we really have to recognize that what goes on inside of our head will either come out in words, or it'll come out in attitudes. When God tells us that we are to take our thoughts captive, and that's found in Second Corinthians, it's a reminder that what starts in the head eventually works its way to the heart, and sometimes out of the mouth. So, we have to recognize that and be really, really careful about our words. With that in mind, we want to give you just *four* quick principles to consider, as you think about your words, and as you are intentional about using your words well.

JS: Alright, so the first one is this: Stop commenting and start using self-control. There are times we make comments that just are not needed. Maybe, Mark helped me clean up the kitchen, but he didn't fill the dishwasher the way that I would like for him to fill the dishwasher. And honestly, that's kind of an old argument for us, because I pretty much let that go now, but sometimes it's those under the breath comments that really begin to erode the foundation of a marriage. They hurt a marriage and they're just not needed. So, stop commenting and start using self-control.

MS: And then a second principal is to stop correcting and start affirming. We can spend so much time correcting behavior, and what I think God would want us to know is that if we would start affirming one another, those issues that we are trying to correct will heal themselves.

JS: And a lot of times, that can happen when maybe your spouse helps you, but they don't do it your way. Maybe you see that it wasn't done as well as you wanted it to. In that moment, we're at a "y" in the road, because they did just give you assistance. They took something off of your plate. But, in that moment, our tendency is to call out what they didn't do well about that, instead of simply saying, "Thank you. Thank you for your help." Even if there's a couple of things that you

wanted, that you would rather have had done and they didn't get done. You know what? Your spouse did 80% of the work and you only have to do 20% of it. Instead of calling them out on the 20% that they missed, what if you affirmed the 80% that they did?

MS: What that does, is it taps into our perfectionism and our control. And I think that's really hard, that we spend so much energy on that portion that didn't get done perfect. That's where we're most destructive.

JS: We are. And so, we have to begin to recognize that. And again, going back to that concept from Second Corinthians where we need to take our thoughts captive. Oh, my goodness, this is a perfect place. You asked your spouse to help clean up the kitchen, and he or she said, "Sure, I'll do that," but you come back in the kitchen and find four things that didn't get put away. Of course, they *did* put away 10 things. That moment is a perfect example of taking our thoughts captive. We have to catch ourselves and think, "Okay, I'm grateful. I'm grateful that they took care of the majority of these things. And now, I only have a few things that I would prefer are put away, and I can do those." That is a beautiful picture of self-control. It's also a beautiful picture of taking your thoughts captive, and then resisting that urge to correct, and instead, affirm what they did do, and how they *did* help.

MS: Yup. The next principle is to stop yelling and start talking. So often, we can let our anger, or our disappointment, or frustration fuel the way in which we communicate. And if we would turn and gain self-control, and start talking to one another, we can gain so much more ground.

JS: This goes back to the safe conversations, which if you just recently joined No More Perfect Date Night, if you actually do a search for 'safe conversations,' you can find a teaching we did on that. That's a tool that you can use to let your spouse know that you need to have a safe conversation about something, and hopefully, keep it in a dialogue space instead of a debate space. We have to recognize the value of how we approach our spouse, and how we respond to our spouse. And a lot of times, people will say, "Well, you don't understand. My spouse doesn't listen to me unless I yell." Well, that's a bad habit that we begin to develop over the years. And honestly, we get into some nasty ruts in our relationship, and what we need to be doing is being willing to grow and change. I remember hearing one person share. In this case, she was a mom. She called herself a yelling mom. She began to be a whispering mom and it took a while. At first, it really threw the kids off. But I think we can do similar things in our conversation with our spouse. Make the determination. Maybe he or she yells at you, and you choose not to yell back. You actually bring that down and begin to make changes.

MS: Yeah.

JS: And then the fourth is to actually... [chuckle]. It's funny, in the last one, we said, "Stop yelling and start talking." This one is: Stop talking and start listening. We really need to recognize that it's as important that we *use* our words well, as it is that we *receive* words well. It's important that we hear our spouse's heart, that we hear what our spouse is saying to us, that we are able to receive their communication. Maybe it's about something they're struggling with. Maybe it's about a time that we disappointed them and they're communicating that. But if we will actually stop talking and start listening better, then we also are honoring the words that our spouse is saying, and recognizing that we really need to take those in.

MS: Yeah, and I think to stop and listen takes some real intentionality. If you're on your phone, and your spouse is talking to you, turn your phone upside down so you can't see the screen, and then look in your spouse's eyes. If you're on your laptop or your computer, this is what I have to do. I have to literally turn my chair away from what I'm doing, or close my laptop screen, so that I'm not more attentive to those demands, and I'm really focused in on what my spouse is saying.

JS: Right. So, just to review, stop commenting and start using self-control.

MS: Stop correcting and start affirming.

JS: Stop yelling and start talking.

MS: And stop talking and start listening.

JS: This is Mark and Jill signing off, with a reminder that your words are powerful. Use them well.