



Month: July 2011

Scripture: Proverbs 10:11 *the mouth of a righteous man is a well of life"*

Food for thought: Think Before You Speak.

Lately my heart has been burdened over how we as women can put a mental stopwatch on our conversations and keep track of how much we talk and how much we listen.....God help us! How many things did you say just yesterday that today need to be confessed? Did you exaggerate a story? Did you shade or distort or imply something that you shouldn't have? Did you waste time discussing the trivial or gossiping?

I, like many of you, grew up being taught that I must carefully plan my words before pouring out my thoughts without concern for their impact. I was taught from a very young age that thinking beforehand will help me to speak and act wisely. My mom always said although it's important to have something to say (at the right time off course) but it is equally important to weigh it first. In the same manner I was also taught it is vital to think also before acting, to consider the effects of my choices. That I had to think of today's plans and consider what their long-range results will be. Although my dear mother has long home to be with the Lord I can almost hear her begging me to "keep these principles in mind!! But have I kept all of them in mind.....Noooooo!!

Isn't it amazing how we grow up in the midst of so much wisdom and counsel yet it seems to enter through one ear and out the next. Then when pressure overwhelms us, certain words start to ring in our subconscious, so loud we want to scream "I wish I knew"!!!!!!!

The book of Proverbs is full of the perils of too hasty a speech. "When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent" (Prov 10:19)."He who guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin" (Prov 13:3). "Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise" (Prov 17:28). "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov 29:20) Ouch!!

I realise now that active listening takes time and practice, but it is a worthwhile skill we can all learn and hone. We can learn to suspend lecturing, squash the desire to talk about ourselves our experiences, and avoid downplaying a speaker's concerns if only we listened more.

The classical writer Zeno said, "We have two ears but only one mouth, that we may hear more and speak less." And Brava Metzia quotes "The righteous speak little, and do much; the wicked speak much, and do nothing.

Could it be when we talk too much and listen too little, we communicate to others that we think our ideas are much more important than theirs. All of us know people who are "talkers." They talk non-stop, mostly about trivial things, or about other people; and some are stuck on one topic: themselves!! Such people teach me something., that before I literally open my mouth to say something I must think, and that most of the time what the other person really needs from me is not my opinion or my advice, but just an empathetic ear. By the way, I have found that this is also often what my husband, children, family and friends need most from me.

All I am saying here is the most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen and think before you speak- if you must. Otherwise just listen. When people are talking, there's no need to do anything but receive them. Just take them in. Listen to what they're saying. Care about it. Most times caring about it is even more important than understanding it.

My prayer is that for the next few weeks may the Holy Spirit give us increasing power to monitor and control what we say. May God help our words to be more appropriate and timely?

So my dear friends I leave you with this: Think before you speak, learn to listen, and listen to learn.

Enjoy the sunshine! See you in August.

Love

Mercy