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by Sharon Jaynes

## The Power of a Woman's Words

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Listen...do you hear them? Open your front door and step out into the world. They swarm around and surround us on every side. Small ones with tremendous impact. Large ones looming and misunderstood. Swirling. Churning. Spinning. Burning. Listen, do you hear them? One of the mightiest forces in all creation...words.

When God created the world and all it contains, He did so with words. He said, "Let there be," and there was. Amazingly, when God created man in His own image, He gave us that same powerful tool. With a simple word we can create a smile on a discouraged child's face, lighten the heart of a husband loaded down with burdens, fan into flame the dying embers of a friend's smoldering dreams, cheer brothers and sisters in Christ to run the race with endurance, and bring the message of hope and healing of Jesus Christ to a wounded world. Words are one of the most powerful forces in the universe and amazingly, God has entrusted them to you and me.

How will we use this priceless gift? The Bible tells us, "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21) and we don't have to go any further than our front door to see the difference our words can make. Let's look at two areas where we have incredible impact.

### **Words have Big Impact on Little People**

The boys lined up on the starting line, waiting for the starting gun to begin the 3.1 mile race through a path in the woods. Parents and fans stood on the sidelines ready to burst into cheers as the herd of young men readied themselves for the State Championship Cross Country meet. My nephew, Stu, was among the runners that day.

Stu's foot left the starting position, his mother, Pat, picked up her thirty-six inch brightly painted megaphone and began to yell, "GO STU!" she cheered, not once but at ten second intervals. When he was out of sight, she ran to another strategic spot along the winding trail where the runners would eventually pass by.

And even though the boys were no where in sight, Pat continued to cheer, "GO STU! At one point she yelled, "GO STU!" and a man from across the park yelled, "HE CAN'T HEEEEAAARRR YOOOUUU!" "I don't know if he can hear me or not," Pat murmured," but if there's a chance he can, I want him to hear my voice cheering him on." So for sixteen minutes, this little dynamo continued to pump confidence and courage into her son's heart.

After the race, I asked Stu, "When you're running on that trail in the woods, can you hear your mother cheering for you? "Oh yes," he answered with a grin. "I can hear her the whole way. "And what does that do for you?" I asked. "It makes me not want to quit," he replied. "When my legs and lungs ache, when I feel like I'm going to get sick, I hear my mom's voice cheering for me and it makes me not want to quit." That is the power of a woman's words to her children as they embark on the great race of life, and it is a picture I have carried with me through the years. I wonder how many children walk away from their dreams because there was no one there to cheer them on. I wonder how many children never even attempt to reach for their dreams because someone they trusted along the way told them they couldn't do it.

From the time a child emerges from the safety of a mother's womb, he or she is shaped and molded by the power of a mother's words. With her eyes locked on her little bundle of squirming love, she coos, comforts and coaxes this miraculous gift from God and *she becomes the mirror in which the child sees himself*. We have the privilege of shaping and molding an eternal soul for a very short, very fleeting period of time. And one of the primary ways we do this is by the words we speak. Whether we have children of our own or the privilege of other people's children in our lives, we have the potential to make an everlasting impact for good or bad.

### **Words can Make or Break a Man**

Just as we have the power to make or break a child, we have the power to build up or tear down a husband. Jona saw both the destructive and constructive power of her words. Don and Jona were a striking couple with everything going for them. By the time they celebrated their first wedding anniversary, they had promising careers, a new home, and were well on their way to acquiring the American Dream.

But over the next three years, Don started a new business, they faced a second mortgage, and they had a dwindling bank account. Jona sank into a depression and began to use her words as weapons to punish Don for their failing finances.

“You’re so stupid,” she’d say. “What’s wrong with you. You can’t do anything right.” Word by word, Jona destroyed her marriage and her man. Because he was a Christian, she thought he would never leave, but she was wrong. One day Don walked out and the following year, the divorce was final.

“Shortly after Don left, I woke up to God’s still small voice,” Jona explained. “He seemed to say, ‘Is this what you wanted?’ Did you want a divorce? Do you want to be alone?’ Oh God,” Jona cried, “What have I done?”

While Don and Jona were officially divorced, God began to work on Jona’s heart. She saw what her words had done, and with God’s help she began to change. She vowed never to use her words to show disrespect again. She would never use her words to hurt, but to heal. Jona’s heart longed to be reunited with Don, but her ultimate goal was to become the woman God wanted her to be as she immersed herself in Bible study and prayer.

She began to see Don through God’s eyes and use her words to build up rather than tear down. At first Don was skeptical, but eventually he fell in love with Jona all over again. They were remarried on a beautiful August day.

Don later told me, “I don’t think any single thing takes away a man’s strength of character more than the loss of respect. Don’t dwell on his weaknesses, but dwell on the positives. Men are in the fight for our lives. We are at war mentally. We’re out there trying to conquer the world. A man needs to know that home is a safe place to be instead of feeling like you’re leaving one battle for another.”

In a survey, I asked hundreds of men what they longed for in the woman of their dreams. One man responded, “I’ve been shut up, shut down, shot down, ridiculed, disregarded, overlooked overbooked, and overwhelmed...I know I was made for a reason. I know that, in God’s eyes, I count. So I simply want someone who believes in me.”

Where will your man go to find encouraging words? Where will he go to find that someone who is cheering for him and believes in him? I hope its home.

### **The Power and Potential of Change**

Aren’t you glad that God is all about change! Be encouraged, my friend. If you are willing to use your words as an instrument of beauty, God is more than able to supply the power to do so. All it requires is *prayer* and *practice*. Sift your words through the filter of Philippians 4:8. Ask yourself, “Is what I am about to say true,

noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy? Will what I'm about to say build up or tear down, encourage or discourage, empower or devour, heal or hurt?

One day I had been praying about my words to my then, eleven-year-old son. I had taken him to an amusement park and was feeling quite the martyr for doing so. Just as we were about to roll down a rickety roller coaster, I leaned forward to remind him of what a great mom he had - just in case he had forgotten. I started to say, "You are so lucky to have a mom like me to bring you to a place like this." But before the words escaped my lips, the Holy Spirit stopped me and asked, *Is that what you want to say? Will he feel lucky?*

So I changed my words and said to my precious son, "Steven, I am so lucky to have a son like you that I can bring to a place like this." With that, a smile spread across his dimpled cheeks, tears trickled down my smiling face and I thanked God for the power to change. Listen...do you hear them? Small ones with tremendous impact. Large ones looming and misunderstood. Swirling. Churning. Spinning. Burning. Listen, do you hear them? One of the mightiest forces in all creation...words.

### **Words to Avoid with Your Children**

- You can't do anything right.
- You are driving me crazy!
- You make me so upset!
- You make me so angry!
- Why did you do that?
- Why can't you make good grades like your sister/brother?
- Look at all I've done for you.
- You don't love me.
- I've told you a thousand times.
- You'll never learn, will you?

### **Words Children Longs to Hear**

- I'm glad you're my son\daughter.
- I love spending time with you.
- I'll never forget the day you were born.
- You were such an incredible gift from God...and you still are.
- You'll make a wonderful wife\husband some day.
- Thanks for cleaning your room.
- You did a great job.

- You teach me so much about life.
- I can always count on you.
- You are God's special gift to me.
- My favorite part of the day is picking you up from school.
- You're such a good helper.
- I'm proud of you!
- I knew you could do it!

### **Twenty-five things never to say to your husband.**

- I told you so.
- You're always in a bad mood.
- You just don't think.
- It's all your fault.
- What's wrong with you?
- All you ever do is complain.
- I can't do anything to please you.
- You made your bed, now lie in it.
- You should have thought about that before.
- You never listen to me.
- All you care about is yourself.
- I don't know why I put up with you.
- I can talk to you until I'm blue in the face and it doesn't do any good.
- If you don't like it, you know where the door is.
- That was stupid.
- What's your problem?
- You think you're always right.
- You're don't own me.
- You never help me around the house.
- Who do you think you are?
- You're impossible.
- How many times do I have to tell you?

### **Twenty-five things your husband longs**

- What can I do for you today?
- How can I pray for you today?
- The best part of my day is when you come home.
- You are one of God's most precious gifts to me.
- Thank you.
- I'm sorry.

- You are so wonderful.
- You look so handsome today.
- You make my day brighter.
- I don't feel complete without you.
- You are my best friend.
- Thank you for taking such good care of me.
- You are my knight in shining armor.
- I will always love you.
- I trust your decisions.
- I can always count on you.
- What would you like to do?
- I prize every moment we're together.
- I see God's fingerprints all over you.
- You are such an inspiration to so many people.
- You are such a wonderful father.
- You could give classes on how to be a great husband.
- I believe in you. What do you think?