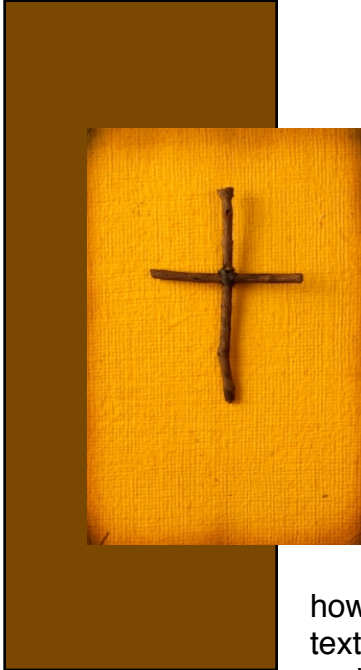


## Lent Day 9, February 29, 2012 Words



*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.  
Proverbs 25:11*

As I was praying about the devotions for this week's topic of self-denial, the Lord kept bringing to my mind the topic of *words*. As I was puzzling through what God wanted me to do with words, I realized how damaging words can be when they are used in the wrong way. It's so easy when we are angry or upset to just spew whatever we want out of our mouths. I think our society as a whole does this. There doesn't seem to be much restraint anymore. You can hear profanity about everywhere you go. I'm always amazed at how people will say *anything* to get on a talk show. Our teens are texting and Facebooking whatever pops into their heads, and reality TV has a just-about-anything-goes attitude as far as what they'll show.

Now maybe you don't have any of the above-mentioned problems with words. Phew. A devotional where I don't have to do such difficult soul-searching. But ... maybe you're guilty on other fronts. Perhaps you have a sarcastic way of responding to your kids, or maybe you throw cutting barbs at your spouse when you're frustrated. Or perhaps, like I do, when you're mad you abuse your words in a different way by shutting them off completely and ignoring the other person. Equally bad. Hmm. Looks like we can all learn something from today's verse.

Maybe it's time to deny ourselves the license to say whatever we want whenever we want. Not only that, but what if we went in the opposite direction. What if we started using our words to build others up?

I love today's verse. I even love how the words sound as you say them. What if we all started denying our right to free speech to say hurtful things and instead invested in others by encouraging them with our words. This verse clearly demonstrates the extreme value and effect our words have. God compares them to two precious metals, silver and gold. When we "fitly speak" our words, they have the value of silver and gold to the person to whom we are speaking them to. Wow. I don't even want to think about the flip side of that--how much damage I can be doing when I don't control my words. Now, this doesn't mean that we can't lovingly confront a person when that needs to be done. What I'm talking about here are words that are out of control.

**Application:** This week, let's do whatever it takes to cork the junk from spilling out of our mouths: complaints, criticism, nagging, sarcasm, gossip, negativity, lies, name calling, and so on. Let's pray that the Holy Spirit will give us a nudge to remind us to

control our words, and let's make a conscious effort to replace those words with something positive, or at least to not say anything at all. And be real. Don't just make something up that you don't mean. Your word fitly spoken could mean the difference between a good and a bad day to a coworker. You could put a smile on a stranger's face. You could bridge the distance between you and your spouse. You could let your child know s/he is loved.

**Prayer:** Lord,

You know how hard it is to control my tongue. Please correct me with the Spirit when I am about to mess up and replace my negative words with the words You would have me speak. Thank you. Amen.