

CAREFUL WITH WHAT YOU SAY

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The *Time's* February 6, 2023 feature article entitled, "The world is led with overtalkers. You run into them all the time" stimulated considerable thinking. (1) Talking too much can be annoying at any time, **but as Solomon suggested that "keeping your lip zipped" stops hasty, hateful, and misguided words, Proverbs 17:28.**

The concern is that talking too much or talking without thinking occurs too often. However, when we engage with individuals who have suffered a personal loss, especially as it relates to a spouse, child, sibling, or close friend it can be quite hurtful. A wise minister and a good friend often indicates that in circumstances where someone has passed away that we visit, take flowers or food, and communication protocol should be limited to "how may I help." This advice can also be used when we interrelate to people who have suffered from such things as poor health, injury, divorce or separation, occupational or economical loss and so forth.

The minister's emphasis is to listen to the person, provide assistance, and be careful not to give common derogatory remarks. Sometimes people give hurtful emotional responses including: "I know how you are feeling"; "it could have been worse"; "such experiences will make you stronger"; "a year was such a long time ago so you need to get over it." (Many social psychologists agree with the minister – "you don't know how they feel", "that getting over a traumatic loss can take at least two years and sometimes longer.") **There are many other improper responses, so develop your own list and avoid them.**

Then there are hurtful spiritual remarks including: "If you hadn't been doing that the Lord would not have allowed that to happen"; "such experiences will only make you a better person"; and the comment that might hurt the most, "you have a secret sin in your life; this is the way God is punishing you and you need to get right with the Lord and live a religious life". **Again, there are many more improper spiritual responses, so develop your own list and avoid them.**

Tragedy and losing a beloved person can extend into other conditions as well. For young children and even older people losing a longtime pet can cause a certain sense of loss.

During the past three years it seems that we have increased our judgmental and hurtful comments. James 1:19 indicate that everyone should be quick to listen, and slow to speak.

Good wisdom and good advice because it includes the spiritual principles of empathy and being led by the Spirit.

(1) Lyons, Dan. The world is filled with overtalkers. You run into them all the time. *Time*, February 6, 2023, p. 62-66.