

August 17, 2026

Before You Say It

August Series: Christ-Centered Relationships

Week Focus: Say It With Grace

Scripture – Proverbs 18:21 - *“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

Devotional Reflection

Most words take only seconds to say, but their effects can last much longer. A sentence spoken in frustration can replay in someone’s mind long after the disagreement has ended, while a timely word of reassurance or truth can strengthen someone when they need it most. Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that our words are not insignificant—they carry the power of life and death and produce consequences in the relationships around us. **Not everything we feel needs to become something we immediately say.**

Wise communication creates space between our reactions and our responses. Before speaking, we can ask whether what we are about to say is true, necessary, timely, and reflective of Christ; this does not mean avoiding difficult conversations, but allowing wisdom to govern what emotion may be trying to release. Jesus reminds us in Luke 6:45 that **“the mouth speaks what the heart is full of,”** which means our words can sometimes reveal anger, hurt, defensiveness, pride, or a desire to win that God wants to address within us first.

Jesus consistently demonstrated this kind of wisdom in His communication. He knew when to speak, when to remain silent, when to correct, and when to ask a question, and even when His words were direct, they were governed by truth, love, and the purposes of His Father. Jesus experienced real emotion, but His words remained submitted to the will and purposes of His Father. **His communication flowed from a heart completely surrendered to God.**

As followers of Christ, we are called to develop that same surrender by inviting the Holy Spirit into the space between feeling and speaking. A simple prayer—**“Lord, help me respond like You”**—can change what we say, how we say it, when we say it, or whether we need to say it at all. And when we do speak too quickly or communicate poorly, Christlike maturity responds with humility by acknowledging the wrong, apologizing without excuses, and seeking forgiveness where necessary. **The grace Christ is producing within us should eventually become audible through us.**

Today, practice creating a little space between your reaction and your response. You do not have to send the text while you are angry, answer before you understand, or win the argument before the conversation ends; instead, surrender your words, tone, timing, and motives to God and ask what would best reflect Christ in that moment. The goal is not perfect communication but increasing surrender, because sometimes one of the wisest and most loving things you can do for a relationship is simply **pause before you say it.**

Focus for Today

Not everything you feel needs to be immediately spoken. Give wisdom and grace an opportunity to shape your response.

Practice

- Before one important conversation, text, email, or response today, intentionally pause.
 - Ask yourself: **Is it true? Is it necessary? Is this the right time?**
 - Consider: **Does my tone reflect Christ, and what am I trying to accomplish by saying this?**
 - Then pray: **“Lord, help me respond like You.”**
 - If God changes what you planned to say—or leads you to wait—follow His direction.
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Prayer

Father, thank You for reminding me that my words carry weight. Help me slow down before I speak and surrender my reactions to You. When emotions are strong, give me wisdom to pause, pray, and respond in a way that reflects Christ. Examine my heart, purify my motives, and guide my tone, timing, and words. Where I have communicated carelessly, give me humility to make it right. Let the grace You are producing within me become evident in the way I communicate with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Reflection Question

What usually causes me to speak too quickly, and what could change if I invited God into the pause before I respond?