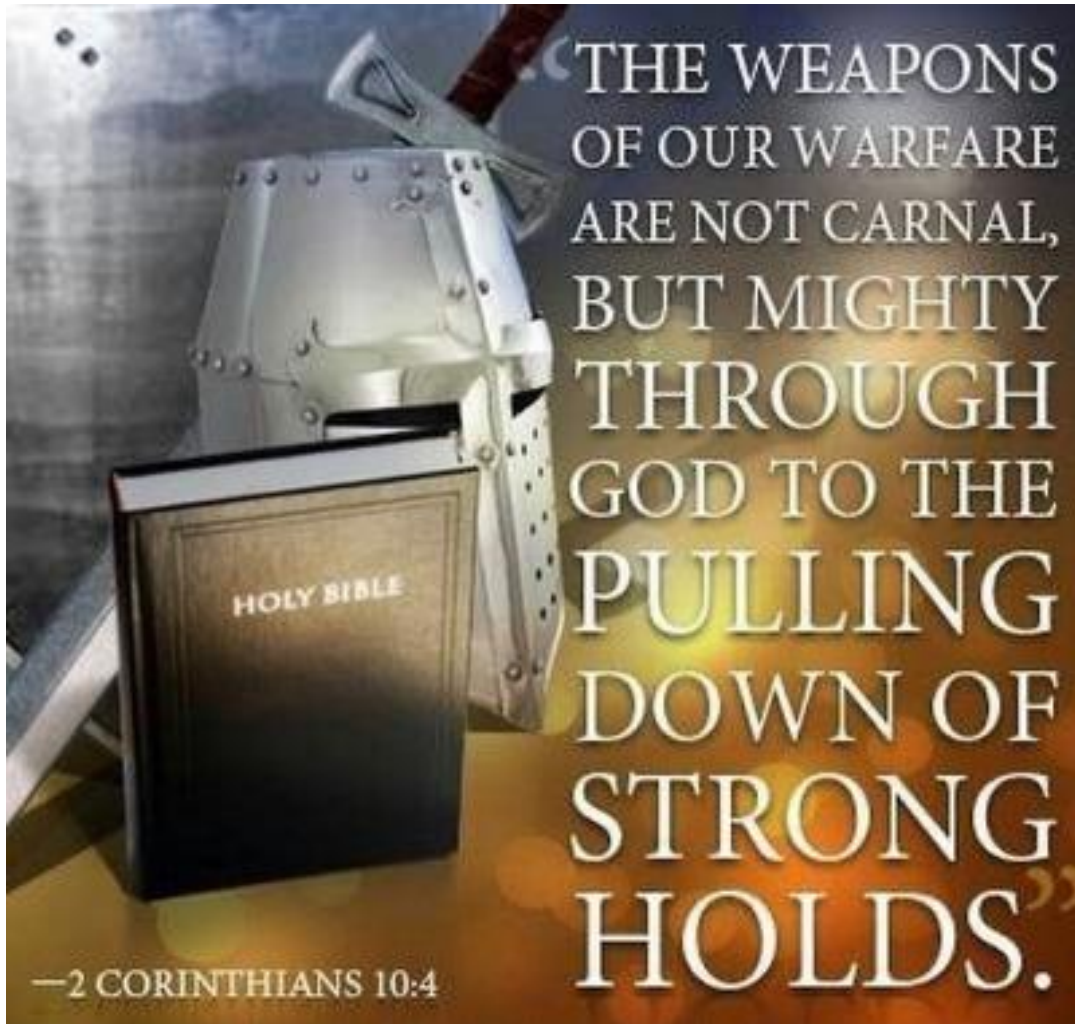


THE ENCOURAGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF HUDSON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

War of the Words



For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4–5)

It is more apparent than ever that we live in the midst of a battlefield of ideas. The airwaves and internet are filled with arguments presenting entirely different versions of reality. One man's good is another man's evil, and we all occupy the same space. It is no wonder then, that things seem to have gotten more heated in public discourse.

The passage above makes it clear that as Christians it is our responsibility to wade into those waters and make a bold stand for truth as God has revealed it in the Holy Scriptures. We have four realms of concern; our own minds, our local church, our brothers and sisters in Christ at large, and the lost world.

As we engage in this work outside of ourselves, there is a great danger that we will present the right argument, be engaged in a right defense of the truth, and yet undermine and even contradict that truth by speaking with a tone that is contrary the Spirit of Christ.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he is again encouraging him to confront the false teachers present at the church of Ephesus, but he is concerned that Timothy does this with a gentle and peaceful approach:

But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:23–26)

It is my concern that the overall tone of Evangelicalism has become quarrelsome. As those truths which we hold dear come under the assault of society, it becomes easier to justify a sinful tone as "righteous anger" or "holy zeal for the truth." In reality, often the motive behind this kind of speech is not zeal for the truth, but pride. There is something in the heart that loves to triumph over another through winning an argument, or worse, humiliating and insulting an opponent. The ego also gets a surge of approval as others jump in to agree with us and applaud our speech.

If we go back to our charge from Scripture, it is clear that our calling is to persuade those who oppose the truth. I sincerely doubt that anyone has been persuaded to change their minds through an abrasive argument. Instead, Paul tells us to let our speech always be gracious.

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (Col 4:5–6)

If we see these individuals as our personal enemies, we will most certainly speak to and of them in hateful ways. However, if we follow Christ in loving them, if we have their eternal good in mind as we engage with them and see them as enslaved by the lies of the devil (as we once were), our compassion for them will color all of our speech.

Our goal should be that they would have an opportunity to hear the Spirit speaking through us. We must allow the Spirit to steer our words and the way in which they are presented. It is the Spirit of God, speaking the truth of God, from the Word of God that will allow their minds to be set free from Satan's snare. If those who hear or read our words can describe them as loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and carefully measured - they will carry the full persuasive power of the Holy Spirit.

God has warned us and instructed us a great deal about the use of our speech. It is helpful to reflect on those passages and to evaluate our own words by them. As with all of God's commands, it is not enough for us to prune our lives by the mere action, but to dig deep and uproot sinful attitudes from our heart.

As you read these scriptures, weigh your own words and the motives they spring up from. Also keep in mind the kind of speech you listen to. It is likely that there are voices you need to close your ears to because they "preach" your heart into a sinful place. Your testimony is affected not just by your own way of speaking, but the way of speaking of those you follow, "like", and share. We are accountable before God not just for the speech we make, but the speech we identify ourselves with and say "amen" to in the heart.

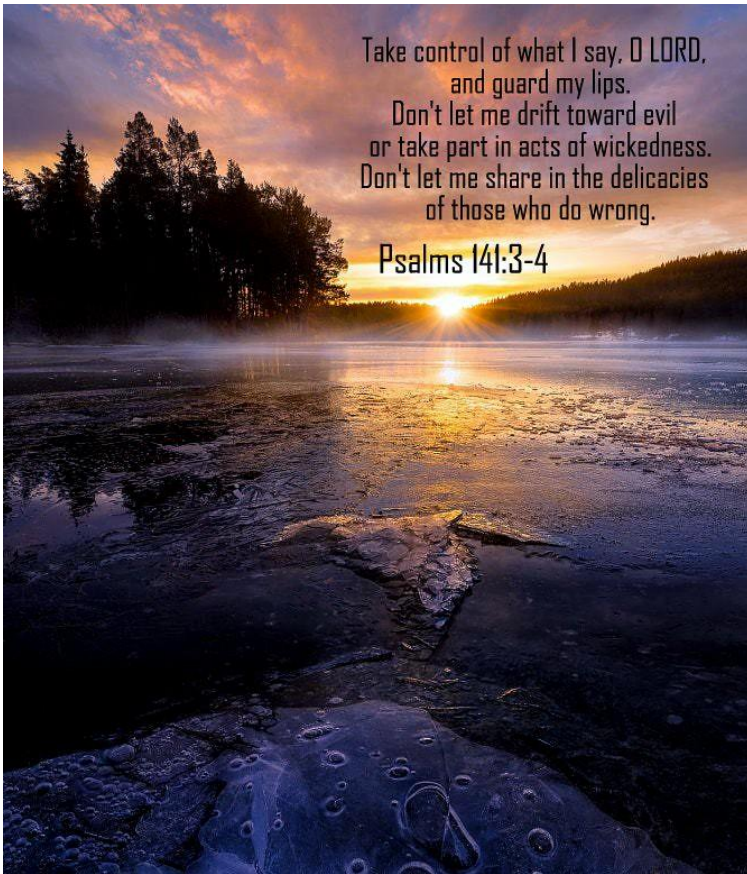


Photo courtesy of Flickr

Take control of what I say, O LORD,
and guard my lips.
Don't let me drift toward evil
or take part in acts of wickedness.
Don't let me share in the delicacies
of those who do wrong.

Psalms 141:3-4

Ephesians 4:29 - Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

James 1:19 - Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;

James 1:26 - If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

James 3:9-10 - With [Our tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

Proverbs 15:1-2 - A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

Proverbs 17:27 - Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

Proverbs 29:11 - A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

Matthew 12:36-37 - I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jesus' words above are convicting and serious, so it is good for us to cry out with the Psalmist, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! (Psalm 141:3)"

In Christ,

Pastor Brandon Current

Wednesday Night Bible Study

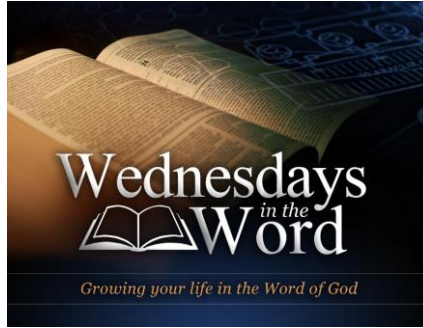


Photo courtesy of Zion.org

Our last class for this summer will be Wednesday, August 7, at 6:00 p.m.

Fall class will resume in September!

Bill Brown is leading a Bible study on several interesting topics this fall. Our study time together will help us to “dive deep” into God’s Word and help us to see how we can apply it to our lives.

Prayer Requests

Linda Kearfott is the HCC Prayer Coordinator!

If you have a prayer request to share or an update, please speak with Linda, write your request on the prayer card in the pew pocket and place it in the offering plate, or contact her at the following number or email.

Linda Kearfott
(309) 232-4528
lindakearfott32@gmail.com



Image courtesy trinitywesternuniversity



The Potter's Kids

The Potter's Kids will resume in the fall. Hope to see you there!

All children are welcome to join us as we study the Ten Commandments. We'll see glimpses of God in His laws, as well as very good rules to live by.



Image courtesy of clipart panda

We are celebrating summer with a Church Picnic at the home of Roger and Stephanie Wolf on Sunday, August 11, at 1:00 p.m.

The main dish and beverages will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share as well as lawn chairs!

The Wolf's address is:
15504 E. 2550 North Road, Hudson.

See you there!



Photo courtesy of SMC.com

**Join the Adult Sunday School Class at 11:00 a.m.
downstairs to discover what the Bible teaches us to:**

Depend on God

God is greater than any challenge we face:

- ◆ **How can we cope when the winds of life change? - 2 Chronicles 14:9-11**
- ◆ **What does dependence upon God look like in the life of a believer?
Seeing God's blessings through a crisis - 2 Chronicles 14:12-15**

Act With Courage

- ◆ **Persistent problems call for courage - 2 Chronicles 15:1-7**
- ◆ **Opportunities to demonstrate courage in our culture - 2 Chronicles 15:8-9**

Worship Continually

- ◆ **Your life as an act of worship - 2 Chronicles 15:10-15**
- ◆ **Sacrifice/Obedience – Key points - 2 Chronicles 15:10-15**
- ◆ **The distractions of life... - 2 Chronicles 15:16-19**

August 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts Sunday School 11:00 a.m.	5	6	7 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study	8 Food Pantry Preparation Day 5:30 p.m. Deacons/Elders Meeting followed By Spiritual Focus Meeting	9	10 10:00 Food Pantry Distribution Day
11 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 1:00 p.m. Church Picnic at the Wolf's	12	13	14 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship	15 5:45 p.m. Worship Team Practice	16	17
18 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	19	20	21 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship	22	23	24
25 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	26	27	28 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship	29	30	31

August Birthdays	
Karen Brown	8/2
Donnie McKinley	8/8
Bill Brown	8/9
Dave Taylor	8/14
Cheryl Johnson	8/26
Judy Beverage	8/28