

## *Reflections with Sharon*

### **Our words are powerful**

*Read Ephesians 4:25-32*

More times than I care to admit, I've been guilty of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time only to regret later that I had ever opened my mouth in the first place.

If for one week, everything we said could be taped and then re-played to us, I believe we would be amazed at the things we so thoughtlessly say that are better left unsaid. The sad thing is that when someone tells us negative things about another person, even when there may not be a bit of truth in what we were told, our minds are instantly poisoned against that person, so that the next time we hear something bad about him or her, that negativism that is lodged within us will immediately confirm the new accusation to us.

Repeating a story, even to a trustworthy friend gives life to it. But by keeping quiet, we could kill unsavory gossip and keep it from spreading. I've learned that every story has three sides, anyway: The first person's side; the second person's side; and the objective, unbiased, truth. The sad fact is that we rarely ever get to the truth of a matter because so few of us are interested in knowing the truth.

What often happens is that once we make up our minds that someone is guilty, we set out to do everything we can to prove that person's guilt. Even when the truth stares us in the face, nothing will move us after we've made up our minds about what we will choose to believe.

Whether or not we realize it, words are a powerful tool; they can produce life or inflict death; they can give hope or bring despair; they can breathe sunshine or create heaviness; they can build friendships or make enemies; they can speak peace or sow seeds of discord; they can awaken gentleness or provoke to anger; they can be champions for the right or the wrong. Words have the power to build up and to tear down; to strengthen and to crush; to bless and to curse; to heal and to wound; to be a force for good and a force for evil.

All of us can recall the hurt we felt from painful words shot back at us from a sharp tongue. When we're angry we don't think rationally; we say things out of our anger and can hurt the people we love most. But everyone appreciates an encouraging word; a kind, gracious word. We've all been grateful for the times in our lives when someone used words to come to our defense; it's always nice to hear affirmative words. So even when what we have to say is true, if we cannot communicate the truth in a kind and loving way, we should remain quiet, lest we do more harm than good.