

Relationship Success

Lesson 3: Speak Words that Build Up

This course follows Jim Tucker's Relationship Success class audio found on the Relationship Success page of Connect the Nations. Please read this lesson while listening to the audio, or just listen and answer the questions.

Vocabulary: (yellow = vocabulary; green = idioms)

insight	core	aptly	to batter (adj. battered)
conflict	unwholesome	to depreciate	channel
prideful	to rip	warfare	impediment
jerk	fountain	to minister (n. ministry)	volatile
enormous	reckless	sarcasm	to stutter
to handle	to pierce	meek	wound
edge	sword	altar	to bow
to yield	deceitful	dump on	conviction
to split (n. split)	to crush	to manipulate (adj. manipulated)	

Discussion:

How many think relationships are important? How many have somebody around you that is very important to you? Alright. How many of you have somebody around you who has irritated you at some point in your life? Ok. Let's go ahead and open in prayer and just jump in, okay? I'm gonna ask my wife Tracy. Honey, would you open in prayer?

Lord, we are so thankful for the opportunity to just know you. Lord, the most important relationship is with you, God. And we thank you Lord that you love us so unconditionally. Tonight, Lord, I just ask for... Holy Spirit, you just come in, lead, and guide this whole time that Jim is sharing. And Lord for those that, Lord, are having challenges in relationships: Lord, there would be clarity, there would be insight, and Lord, that you would speak to them about how to proceed with any difficulties they have. And most of all Lord, we just love you, and we give you this time, Amen. Amen.

Did anybody have a chance this week to use the D.O.A. thing? Good. I'm glad to see that. What's the opposite of D.O.A.? Does anybody remember? A.O.D. What does A.O.D. stands for? You got it. Ok. D.O.A. stands for what? Everybody: Defend or Attack. This is the language of the world. This is the way most people operate. You see it everywhere you go. How many agree that the world bonds around the negative? Do you agree with that? I.e., Relationships at the office, and it can even happen in church. Relationships: they typically bond around the negative.

Alright. God's love is different. I want you to understand this. Say this with me. God's love is a choice. You don't wait to feel it to do it; you do it so you feel it. You don't just wait for something internal to happen; you make a choice to walk in God's love. You make a choice to counter the culture. You make a choice to go against the way the world operates. The way conflict often happens in an organization, in a church, in a family, is typically what I call "bonding around the negative."

This week, did you respond with Defend or Attack or experience that with someone this week? Describe the situation.

This week, did you practice Ask, Own it, and make a Deposit? Describe the situation. How did it feel?

Anybody here ever gotten offended? Anybody here ever offend anybody? Yeah? When a conflict happens, you are either defending yourself or attacking. And it never goes anywhere. How many agree it never accomplishes anything? It never gets anywhere. The opposite of that is A.O.D. It is just Ask. What is that person needing? What do you need? Learn to get where you just ask instead of fighting for it. Ask for what they need, and own your stuff. Everybody say, "Own it." Look at the person next to you and say, "I'm sorry," "I was wrong," "I was stupid, **prideful**," "I was a **jerk**," "and this is the last time I'm ever gonna say this to you in my life." You own it, but there's a time when you just gotta own your stuff. You put **enormous** amounts of energy into avoiding just owning your stuff.

And "D" stands for what? Make a Deposit. When you try to resolve something, you wanna make deposits in the other person, whatever it might be. That's how the world operates. That's the spirit of the world. That's just how it is. How many know the first thing we typically do when we're offended, when somebody hurts us, is we wanna get somebody on our side. Is it true? How many know there's a lot of bonding in the world around who you don't like, what you don't like, what you're against. You can go out with couples, you know, go out to eat with somebody and the conversation that comes up is "What are you against?" And it just goes down that path. And part of what this class is about is creating a different spirit wherever you go. You be the one to be the opposite of that – in your home.

Now, outta [out of] all the married people, how many have ever done this? How many know, you can spend hours defending and attacking, defending or attacking. Defend or Attack: Has it ever gone anywhere? And you never go anywhere with it. At some point, you gotta humble yourself and go into the A.O.D. That's how people operate, "Well, I am offended." "Oh, you're offended? Well, I'm offended that you're offended." "I'm more offended than you are." Listen folks, how you **handle** an offense will determine the rest of your life. I mean, it determines your life. There are people that go around offended and they live with that **edge** – just offended.

Think of the last few times that you were offended. How do you normally respond when you are offended?

What would it look like for you to do what Jim is talking about?

Now, here's what I want you to get. It can be between each other, husband and wife; it can be at the office place; it could be church; but it could be in the world. What happens right here at the moment of that offense of being brought in against them, them, against them. How many understand it's the entry point of the demonic? In James chapter three, "Don't say that your wisdom that is coming from bitterness is of God, for it is earthly, unspiritual, and of the devil." Wow! How many know you can be a Christian and be used of the devil? Alright, don't point right now, alright? How many of you have been hurt by words? How many of you have blessed by words? Words are powerful.

How many know the Holy Spirit will always be prompting you to do the right thing? And you either are listening and obeying, or you're saying, "No I'm gonna **yield** to the other side." Anybody can be a tool of

the Holy Spirit or a tool of an evil spirit. How many know whole church **splits** have begun just like this? Alright? Families are going into Thanksgiving holiday time. Families have been split apart by one person taking offense against another one and embracing that. Somebody has to be the peacemaker; somebody has to demonstrate the opposite spirit. Say this with me, "Loyalty is speaking only good about my friends and those in authority over me, especially when I'm upset with them." My, my, my! (a southern expression). Some of you don't even like that. You're looking at me like, "Jim, I was taking notes. I'm not now."

Words are so powerful. There's a verse that is so **core** to us in our relationship, and it's been a part of our family and everything. Ephesians 4:29, It says, "Let no **unwholesome** talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up, that it may benefit those who listen." The world bonds around the negative. "Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up."

I've had so many opportunities in life to see the power of this work. Have you ever been with a couple, with another couple, like maybe you go out or something, and they spend the whole time cutting each other down? **Ripping** each other? It's not the heart of God. Look at all these verses here:

Ephesians 4:29: Let not any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Life and death are in the power of the tongue. (Proverbs 18:21)

The mouth of the righteous is the **fountain** of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. (Proverbs 10:11)

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. (Proverbs 10:20)

Reckless words **pierce** like a **sword**, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a **deceitful** tongue **crushes** the spirit. (Proverbs 15:4)

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

Can you remember a time when you said something to someone that you now regret? Perhaps your words hurt them instead of building them up. Perhaps they were reckless instead of careful, wise, and strengthening. Describe that time.

In your situation, what could you have said instead?

When's the last time you really blessed someone with your words? Describe that time. If it's been a long time, talk about why you think blessing is difficult for you.

How many would agree that our culture is more sarcastic than blessing? Do you agree with that? Do you believe we should counter it? And what I want us to do is to get in a habit of countering the culture. If

it's been a long time since you just sat down and just really blessed somebody close to you, it's too long. It needs to be a part of our life; it needs to be a part of what we do.

In the kingdom of God, we major in giving, not winning. It's about giving. In the kingdom of God, we major in giving, not winning. Look at somebody next to you and say, "It's not about me. It's about you." To walk in the room thinking, "It's not about me. It's about you," and just to know it, to live in that, to live in that realm. And you say, "Well, I have insecurities. I have insecurities. This is what I feel. This is the way..." How many know that lot of insecurity is just based on pride? You are so self-focused that everything is about you. But if it's not really about you, if it's about other people, [then] you learn to live out of that.

If we major in giving, humility is not how much we **depreciate** ourself, but how much we appreciate others. Humble people don't think less of themselves, they just think of themselves less. It's not a matter of putting yourself down, you just think of yourself less. Again, demons use people; the Holy Spirit uses people. What we wanna do is demonstrate the opposite spirit of the world. The essence of spiritual **warfare** is demonstrating the opposite spirit of the world. Somebody has to change the spirit that is around us.

A lady that had come to me once just saying how she hates her work. She hates her job. She hates everything about where she works. And she said, "I'm gonna quit." Anybody here hate your job? It's okay to say it, if you do. Okay, thanks for your honesty. Anybody here sometimes struggle at work or just with the other people? Tonight, this is about what to do when you're pretty sure somebody you work with is demon possessed. What to do... We have the privilege of not just coming into the culture and adapting. We have the opportunity as Christians, as believers, secure in the love of God, to counter that spirit, to go the opposite. But often we bring it into our relationships. We bring it into our home.

This lady came and talked, and she just said, "I'm just, I'm so troubled at my work, they're all mean. They're all... I just can't work there another minute. They're just terrible people. I have to quit. Everybody talks about everybody. The attitude of everybody is horrible." And, anyway, she just went on about how bad all of these people are. And I said, "Well, you know, you could go, but I just wanna give you a little bit of a challenge." I said, "What if you just went back there and did everything the opposite that you see around you? What if you just did the opposite?" The essence of spiritual warfare is demonstrating the opposite spirit that's coming at you. So, I said, "Let's just try it for thirty days."

And we made a list that day. She made up her own list. And then she added a little bit to it. That day she came up with four things. And she said, "Ok, I'm gonna listen to everybody's needs. I'm gonna listen to them. When I hear something," and she said, "I'm gonna begin to give people a book or something about whatever they're going through. I will not talk bad about anybody. I'm gonna memorize people's birthday. I'm gonna find it out, and I'm gonna give them a gift. Anybody that is in that month, I'm gonna give them a gift. I'm just gonna bless people. I'm gonna do the exact opposite."

And so, she did. She just began to love people, just love people. Thirty days later – it was actually a little over that – we talked about a month and a half later. I saw her and I said, "Well, did you quit that job?" She said "No, it is wonderful! Those people have totally changed. I love those people." How many of you know they didn't change? It's a perspective. It's the way you look at life, you know. We live in a sarcastic culture. One of the examples that I like to give – I mean, she was just a great example. You do the opposite. Bless people instead of cursing people that we talked about last week. Do the opposite.

Can you relate to the lady that Jim is talking about? Perhaps you have a coworker, family member, or a neighbor with a negative spirit that bothers you. What is one thing you could do to show the opposite of the spirit they are showing you? Perhaps some of the lady's ideas could help you.

Take a quiet minute and try to think of three more things that you could do to show the opposite spirit to this person.

The other example that I had was in London. One time I was **ministering** in a church in London, and I was so honored to be there. I mean, this is a large church. It's about a five thousand people. And those who don't know, churches in Europe that are big are rare. Most of them are like a hundred people. They are just very small. This is a big one. And I was so honored to be there. And so, this one day, I taught in the Bible school. And then later that week, on the weekend, I was going to be in the church to minister in the church, and I was just so honored to be there. And I didn't want to mess it up. For those of you who ever speak, you just don't want to mess it up. And I was sitting with ten of their leaders at lunch, after teaching in the Bible school. And they began to talk about their pastor. And they began to say, "You know, our pastor is not really a pastor." And I thought "Wow, where is this going?" And I wanted to connect with these guys. So, I wanted to find some way to agree. And I knew, I can't agree. I knew he's a great teacher, he has a great healing ministry, and crowds come to this church. And I understood what they were saying, but I mean, they were just really going for it.

And I understood, but then I thought about it. And I looked at all of these guys, wanting to connect, and I said, "Guys, the truth is, because of his teaching gift, and his integrity, and the **ministry** God has given him, thousands of people come to this church. And number two, you guys wouldn't have a job if he wasn't who he is." And they got just about that quiet. And everything changed, everything changed. And then I said, "Let's talk about something else." And they picked right up on it, and they turned it around. And they went around the table and began to bless their pastor.

Take a quiet minute and try to think of ways that you could bless with the person you thought about earlier. Share these words with the group.

Words are powerful. Words are so powerful. There are people that are just hungry. We live in a sarcastic world. **Sarcasm**. Sarcasm is the spirit of the world. Don't embrace it. It's a substitute for intimacy. Sarcasm is a substitute for intimacy. It replaces a **meek** and quiet spirit. Sarcasm gives us a false sense of power. It is a replacement for unresolved issues. Sometimes, instead of actually talking, people just get sarcastic – just make sarcastic remarks. We need to laugh at ourself, at our own expense, instead of laughing at others at their expense. Be determined to demonstrate the opposite spirit of the world, and practice it. See yourself different. See yourself as gracious, kind, and encouraging. Ok, what do you think?

What keeps us from being willing to bless and honor each other? What do you think? It's pride. The thing that keeps us from being willing to just bless and honor is pride. We are so hungry for it, and people don't even know how hungry they really are. But hungry for honor, hungry – just starving to be blessed, to have people say things that build up, that encourage. So often this D.O.A thing that we talk

about here, the – you know, defend or attack? It happens whenever somebody gets offended by something, and then they begin to move into that mode. And the humility.

One of the greatest examples of humility that I've seen with this recently is a pastor at a church where I was ministering on Matthew chapter 5: "When you bring your gift to the altar, and there you remember that someone has something against you..." Jesus said, "Go to them. Make it right. Then come back to the altar." This church had gone through a very difficult time. They had just lost about a third of their church because the pastor had to shut down a Christian school because of just money. And the church was mad, and many people left.

And so here I am, ministering on this topic. And when I got through, the pastor of the church, right before I was about to pray, he got up, took the microphone. He said, "I need to say something." And in front of his congregation, he just repented. And humility. He got up before everybody. And he said, "Folks, the reason why so many people have left our church... One of the major reasons is the way I have handled my offense at them for being upset with me about closing the school." He said, "I wanna tell you, this is my fault. I take ownership of it. I'm gonna call people today. And I wanna ask you to call people that you know that I've offended. And we are gonna turn this around."

Well, you can imagine what happened that evening. All of those people went, and they called people, and they repented. They blessed them with their words. And that night in the service, not only the other third of the people that had left that church, other people came, and there was healing there. But somebody had to demonstrate the opposite spirit. Somebody had to come against that.

How did this man put into practice what Jim is teaching? How did it affect the conflict he had caused?

Can you think of a conflict that you caused but is not resolved? Explain.

What could you do to put into practice what Jim is teaching?

Now, what do you do when somebody tells you something bad about somebody? What do you typically do? What do you normally do whenever somebody tells you something bad? Jump in. What? You wanna bond with them. Ok, what would happen if you did the opposite? Ok, let me tell you some things that you can do. Here's what you wanna ask. You wanna Ask again. Loyalty is speaking only good about my friends and those in authority over me especially when I'm upset with them. Wow! "Why are you telling me this?" When somebody comes to you and wants to dump on you negative about somebody. "Why are you telling me this? Where did you get this information? Have you personally checked out the facts? Have you gone to this person yourself personally? And the last question, can I quote you?"

How many think that would end a lot of stuff? Yea, "Can I quote you?" Because we don't want to be quoted. But it would just end stuff. It just ends it. It's amazing what can happen when you say, "Look, I'm just not gonna bond around that. I'm just not gonna..." Bless those that curse you. Bless them. What we wanna do is, instead of that, we wanna curse them back. It doesn't mean they are not wrong. Somebody came to me last week in the end and asked, and they said, "I think you said this, but I wanna be sure."

How many know, if you are being abuse, get out of there. Right? Ok, say with me, “If I am being abused, get out.” If you're being **manipulated** and controlled and **battered** in a relationship, you get out of there. This teaching doesn't mean you stay, but you can still bless that person. You can still pray for them. You can still want the best for them. But that's fear; that's not love. That's fear; it isn't love. The people are starving to have words said to them. But so many people are so hurt in life, they go around like this all the time, or they are going around like this, like, “Don't mess with me.” And oh, but people are starving to be loved with words, to be blessed with that.

Now if you're married here today, ask yourself the question: How am I doing with blessing my spouse regularly? Just inside. Just ask. Ask the Lord to show you. How am I doing? Because it will determine everything. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Words create beautiful relationships and words destroy relationships. Do you agree with that? It's our choice. Our words can make us a tool of the Holy Spirit; it can make us a tool of an evil spirit. But it's our choice. And sometimes, God's love is a choice, not a feeling. So, you think, well I'm going to wait till I feel all this love of God for people. It's not like that. You make a choice to be that person. You make a choice to be that **channel**. You make a choice. It's something we choose to do. To come out of the sarcastic culture and just be the blessing to people around us. And you know what, it blesses you. By faith be a blesser, by faith speak words of life to people. Expect God to use you in that way.

Think of someone in your life who is special to you – your spouse, your parent, your children, your boss, your teacher, a friend. Write their name and some words to build them up in a genuine way. What do you see in them that you love, that you admire, that you see for their future? Share your words with the group.

Here's what I want you to get: God uses all of us. And God wants to use you. And I wanna encourage you today, to leave, start even here, just start even in this room, but leave here today thinking, “My words are powerful. I wanna be a tool of the Holy Spirit.” One of the things that means a lot to me is little children – you know, to really minister to little children that way. I saw a little, a young little man who is probably six years old in the restroom when I was coming in today. And I make it a point to get down with children, look them in the eyes and tell them what I see. See, now I've learned to expect God to speak words of encouragement through me.

When I was his age, when I was a child, for me this was... I was in the sixth grade. Some of you who know my testimony, I grew up with a very bad speech **impediment**. I was very scared, nervous, everything... I couldn't speak. I couldn't read the scriptures out loud. I mean, I was very nervous – grew up in a **volatile** home, and I was just scared all the time. When I was in the sixth grade, I had such a bad speech impediment that they gave me two speech therapists that I met with. I **stuttered**. I stuttered so bad, and I'll never forget these two speech ladies looked at me, because they said, “What do you wanna do?” I said, “Well, I really believe that...” and it took me forever to get the words out. “But I believe that God...” – it was worse than that – “wants me to be a preacher.” I've been laughed at before for saying that, but these two speeches ladies just looked at me and said, “That's great. You will do it!” I can still see their faces. I remember the kindness of their faces. And you just don't know – by the way, if you're a teacher – just know how powerful your words are. And that little guy grew up. And it took me a while, but I got to where I could speak. It amazes me now what God has done – the power of our words. Oh, words.

I'm gonna ask you, how many can apply this in your life? Quit being a sarcastic, arrogant jerk. If that's you, stop it, just stop it, repent. Right? Stop it. But, the other thing to embrace is that God wants to speak through you. He wants to use you, and sometimes he just wants to heal **wounds** that have happened to you by blessing other people. Think that way and watch what God does.

Can I ask you to take this minute and just **bow** your heads. Just ask the Lord to show you. "God, why do you want me to apply this to me? What are you saying to me, God?" Is it about your home? How much do you bless in your home? How much is that there? How much are there words of blessing and encouragement? How much D.O.A. are you doing? How much blessing are you doing? Expect God to speak through you. He wants to.

So, Lord, we thank you tonight that your words over us are blessing. Your words over us are always good. Your words over us, God, that you speak to us are always empowering. May we hear you tonight saying to us, "Go out and bless." Let your words bring healing, in Jesus's name. Amen.

Can I tell you one more thing? One more thing, real quick. Husband and wife, one of the blessings of my life – I just feel like I should tell you this. One of the things that happens every night – I'm letting you into our little world, for just a minute – What we do every night because this is such a **conviction** of ours, and it just brings such joy in our home. The last thing – I made up my mind years ago – the last thing Tracy hears from me at night. I have my iPhone, we put... I put on one worship song at night... We're going to bed. The iPhone's on the table, and as the worship song is going down, and we pray a little bit. The last thing she hears every night is, "I love you, my little angel." And I begin to tell her everything she means to me, and everything she means to God. The first thing she hears in the morning is blessing – every day, every week, every month, year after year. Do I always feel it? Not always, most of the time. But I want to tell you: The choice of those words brings joy to our marriage and our life. Choose it. Don't wait to feel it to do it. Do it! Go out of here, and watch what God does through you through being a minister with words. God bless you, thank you.

This Week:

Write in your journal:

1. Take some time this week to pray over situations where you need to Ask, Own it, and make a Deposit. Make a plan to put into practice what you've been learning.
2. Pray over situations where you have bonded over the negative. Make a plan to turn those situations around with blessing.
3. Think of more people you want to bless this week. Take some time to bless them genuinely. Write how these experiences have encouraged you.
4. Think of a person who needs this lesson and share it with them this week!