

## **The right way to speak truth into others' lives**

*Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.*

Proverbs 13:3

A mother recounts how her kids won four free goldfish at a school carnival. So she went out and bought a used 10-gallon aquarium for a mere 5 dollars. Of course, it was dirty, but the savings made the two hours of clean-up a breeze. Those four new fish looked great in their new home... at least for the first day.

But by the next day, one had died. Too bad, but three remained. Monday morning revealed a second casualty, and by Monday night a third goldfish had gone belly up. So she called in an expert, a friend who had a 30-gallon tank. It didn't take him long to discover the problem: She had washed the tank with soap, an absolute no-no. Her uninformed efforts had destroyed the very lives she was trying to protect.

All too often, in our zeal to clean up the world around us, we unfortunately use "killer soaps"—condemnation, criticism, nagging, and angry words. At the moment, it seems like we're doing the right thing, but our harsh, self-righteous treatment is more than others can bear.

So what's the answer? Well, we have to use words of love when dealing with the sin of others. We can't expect people to respond to our negative attitudes, but must affirm we love them and express a genuine concern for their well-being. That's the key to speaking truth into others' lives!

### **Prayer Challenge**

Pray that God would help you speak the truth to others in a spirit of love and unity.

### **Questions for Thought**

How have you seen the power of words to tear down or lift up in the past?

Who are some people in your life today to whom you can speak truth in a spirit of love and affirmation?