

A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft

8404 – “The Most Dangerous Runaway of All”

Proverbs 12:18

March 28, 2019

A runaway train: that's how they billed the upcoming story on the evening news, and I stayed tuned. They weren't exaggerating. Somehow a freight train (this actually happened in Ohio a few years ago) started rolling down the tracks with no one on board. It kept rolling for many miles across the Ohio countryside, sometimes at speeds of nearly 60 MPH. It was pretty amazing to see the footage of a railroad intersection, lights blinking, gates down, cars stopped, and here is a train just rolling through without anyone at the controls. Well, using a combination of ingenuity and heroism, they finally managed to get a couple of men aboard who were able to stop it. And that's a very good thing!

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **"The Most Dangerous Runaway of All."**

A runaway train - a lot of damage possible. But it's not the most dangerous runaway of all. No, that would be a runaway mouth; which way too many of us have way too much of the time.

Listen to what our word for today from the Word of God has to say about it in Proverbs 12:18. "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Most of our words either have a healing effect or a hurting effect. Tragically, we just let too many reckless words come pouring out; critical words, negative words, accusations, frustrations, complaints, putdowns, sarcasm. Usually we don't have malicious intent, but still our runaway words leave wounds and walls that we may not even realize. Often we'll say something that we've forgotten by bedtime, but the person who heard it may remember it for years to come.

That's why God tells us in Ecclesiastes 5, "Do not be quick with your mouth . . . Do not let your mouth lead you into sin" (Ecclesiastes 5:2, 6). We probably all need a wall plaque of that don't you think? If you have a tendency to be "quick with your mouth", the odds are your mouth is doing way too much sinning. For a lot of us, if we think it, we say it without considering the damage it may do to someone's reputation, to someone's worth, to a relationship, to unity, to our Lord's reputation.

I really don't think some of us understand the weight of our words. We don't realize how deep our words go, how much people remember what we say, how much we're quoted to others, or how much we're affecting other people's attitudes. For us, we're just unloading our feelings or our opinion and then moving on. But our words leave a trail, and often as they are said of the forced march of Native tribes years ago, it's a "trail of tears".

Which is why a man like David prayed a prayer like he prayed in Psalm 141:3. Remember, the Bible says David was a "man after God's own heart" who really wanted to be God's man. And recognizing the power of his words, he prayed, "Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips." That's a prayer some of us may need to pray every day, to post on a wall, maybe on a mirror somewhere, to commit to memory for frequent recall. "Lord, please help me to think about what I'm saying and before I say it. Help me guard what I let come out of my mouth. Help me hear what I sound like to other people, and help me to measure what I say."

Yes, a runaway train is a scary thought, and there's no telling who it may hurt or who it may injure. But a runaway mouth? In a lot of ways that's scarier and it's a lot more common. So much damage done that could be avoided if we'll just keep that train in our mouth from running off on its own.

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