

1. Groeschel, Craig *Soul Detox: Clean Living in a Contaminated World* Zondervan, 2013
2. Neu, Jeremy *Sticks and Stones: The Philosophy of Insults* Oxford University Press, 2009

## THE FOLLOW UP

**TOXIC — PART 1**  
***You have 6 days to get  
these 4 devos and the Quiet  
Time Challenge done***



*Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. Avoid all perverse talk; stay far from corrupt speech. ~ Proverbs 4:23,24*

## DEVO #1—Truth or Trash

### READ: Proverbs 12:13-23; 18:13-21

In his book, *Soul Detox*, Craig Groeschel writes these words, "When someone says something to you or about you, train yourself to categorize the words [as] truth or trash. Analyze the message and its source before swallowing and digesting what someone else wants to feed you. [Ask yourself], are their words true? Based on Scripture?...If so, embrace them. Allow these life giving words to minister to your soul and conform you to the image of Christ. If the words are untrue and mean-spirited (without being constructive), then call them what they are—toxic waste. Reject those words. Don't let them into your soul. Take out the trash and leave it by the curb. Delete toxic words and insert truth."<sup>1</sup>

1. Why do you think there are so many verses in the Bible about words and how we use them?
2. Why is Proverbs 18:21 so true?
3. What do you usually do with non-constructive negative words that you hear? Do you keep them in your heart or trash them?
4. What do you usually do with non-constructive negative words you think about saying? Do you trash them or say them?

### PRAYER

~Thank God for those who speak constructively to you  
~Confess to God, if necessary, keeping trash or speaking trash  
~Ask God to help you throw out the trash and not to speak trash

## ADDITIONAL NOTE SPACE

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## POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Ask God to speak to you about your words. Ask Him to help your words be a blessing to others
- ◆ Review how you and your friends talk to each other. What might need to change?
- ◆ Keep praying at least ten minutes each day
- ◆ What words do you need to trash?

## QUIET TIME CHALLENGE

### NOTE:

The *Quiet Time Challenge* is NOT a devotional in itself. It is designed for you to do separately apart from your daily devotional time.

### HOW IT WORKS:

Find a quiet place with no distractions. Make this between just you and God. Clear your mind then read the Bible verse(s). After doing so, work through the questions. At the end, spend five to ten minutes in "listening mode." Just ask God to speak to you and then be quiet and seek to hear His voice.

### PART 1 — READ: Proverbs 10:32

### PART 2 — QUESTIONS

Explain this verse in your own words:

How are your words being used? To bless or to curse? To bring life or to bring hurt?

### PART 3 — LISTEN

Ask God to examine your heart. Ask Him to show you if the words you usually use are right or not. Then seek to hear His voice speak to your soul. (Feel free to jot down anything you hear.)

## DEVO #2 — Your Heart as Fort Knox

### READ: Proverbs 4:20-27; Ephesians 6:10-18

Have you heard of Fort Knox? It is a fort in Kentucky that holds 4,578 metric tons of gold—that's roughly 240 BILLION dollars worth. As you can imagine, any place holding that much gold has A LOT of security!

In fact, the door to the vault is so big that it weighs nearly 45,000 pounds, and it is blast proof, drill proof, and laser proof! Not that anyone trying to steal the gold could even get to the vault, since it is guarded by more than 30,000 soldiers.

Why the Fort Knox trivia? Well, just as the U.S. diligently guards its gold reserves, so we need to diligently guard our hearts. We need to secure them so that no toxins can get in there and cause real damage.

1. Why does Solomon (the writer of Proverbs) say that ABOVE ALL ELSE we need to guard our hearts?
2. Think of some toxic words you have heard recently. Who said them, and what have you done with them?
3. How can guarding your heart make a big difference with your outlook on life?
4. Who do you especially need to guard your heart against?

### PRAYER

~Thank God for the wisdom of His Word

~Confess to God, if necessary, not carefully guarding your heart

~Ask God to help you choose the right things to go in your heart

## DEVO #3 — When Negative is Positive

**READ: Psalm 141:3-5; Proverbs 27:6; Deuteronomy 8:10-18**

In life, we will ALL say or do dumb stuff from time to time. However, for some, that "time to time" part turns into "often." It is in these times, when we need to remember that negative words from someone who cares about us could be just what is needed.

When you hear these words from a parent or friend, keep the following things in mind. **FIRST**, you should immediately pray about what you just heard and ask God if it is true or not. Ask Him to show you where you are wrong. **SECOND**, if you know you have blown it, humbly confess it to God and to anyone else you may have hurt. **FINALLY**, be willing to change your choices and seek God's wisdom to keep you on the straight path.

1. Why do both Psalms and Proverbs say negative words from someone who cares about you is a *GOOD* thing?
2. Why does God sometimes bring negative things into our lives according to Deuteronomy? What does He want to teach us?
3. How do you usually react when someone who cares about you says something that you do **NOT** want to hear?
4. Do you need to "speak the truth in love" to someone you know who is making poor choices?

### PRAYER

~Thank God for those who speak the truth in love to you  
~Confess to God, if necessary, not listening to these people  
~Ask God to help you take (and give) correction well

## DEVO #4 — Sticks and Stones

**READ: 1 Kings 12:1-20**

Someone, who apparently was deaf, once coined, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Few things are *LESS* true than this children's rhyme. In his insightful book, *Sticks and Stones*, Jerome Neu shows that insulting words do much to show people their own character. Then he goes on to show how the extraordinary power of words can quickly destabilize our sense of self, threaten identity, crush our self-respect, and belittle our self-esteem.<sup>2</sup>

Such is the power of words. And such is the situation that the young king Rehoboam found himself in because of his careless use of words.

1. What do you think about the validity of the "sticks and stones" rhyme? Do you find it to be true or false? Why?
2. What was the cause of Rehoboam's problems?
3. The power of words split a kingdom. Have you seen the power of words split a friendship?
4. How could Rehoboam have learned from his father Solomon's words in Proverbs 18:19?
5. How can you learn from those words?

### PRAYER

~Thank God for the wisdom found in His Word  
~Confess to God, if necessary, injuring a friendship through the power of words  
~Ask God to help you be someone who heals, blesses, and encourages through words