



# GPS GUIDE: FEBRUARY 13, 2022

## Grow. Pray. Study

### **Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany** **Sermon: Family Words: Hurtful of Giving Life**

*Colossians 3:8-9a*

But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another.

*James 1:19*

Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.

*Colossians 3:12-13, 15b*

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other...And be thankful.

### **Monday: Read Proverbs 10:6-12**

The principles in these seven Hebrew proverbs speak clearly, if not specifically, to our communal life. Verses 6-11 all contrast people who are honest, trustworthy, and upright with those who deceive, who reject wisdom in order to pursue their own ways, and who do violence, if not physically then emotionally. In what ways have you felt the difference between relationships that embody the "righteous" attitudes and speech listed here with those torn by the "foolish" or "wicked" qualities? How can you use words to nurture more healthy relationships? "Love covers all offenses" in verse 12 used the same Hebrew word as verse 11's "the mouth of the wicked conceals violence." Here, said commentator Paul Koptak, it meant "the covering that promotes healed relationships ... Hatred stirs up - love smooths over. Discord and dissension spring from hatred, but love nurtures harmony." When has love healed in your life, not by ignoring a problem, but by being the glue that points beyond the problem to an essential connection worth preserving?

*Prayer: God of love, make me wise and righteous in the best and broadest sense of those words. Give me a heart from which flow words that honestly help and heal in the lives of those I love most. Amen.*

**Tuesday: Read Colossians 3:12-14**

The apostle Paul trained to be a rabbi (cf. Acts 22:3). It's no surprise that, after he became an itinerant Christian preacher, he taught his Gentile converts the principles of speech and relationships found in Proverbs. But he added a powerful additional motive to his teaching: Jesus' example. "As the Lord forgave you, so also forgive each other," he wrote. Paul called all of Christ's followers to show five qualities: "compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." When have you shown those qualities toward someone you love? When has someone shown them toward you? What other responses might you or they have chosen? Would those alternatives have made things better or worse? Every week in worship we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Colossians said, "As the Lord forgave you, so also forgive each other." How does accepting, down deep inside, that God forgives you transform your approach to forgiving others? What factors make seeing yourself and others as "forgivable" particularly significant in building durable family relationships?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, please keep shaping me into a person of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Give me the grace to forgive as you've forgiven me. Amen.*

**Wednesday: Read Colossians 3:15-17**

Paul went on to tell the Colossian Christians, "The peace of Christ must control your hearts." He wrote that to people who lived in a world at least as cruel and unsettling as ours, perhaps more so. Not only that—the Greco-Roman world often turned its hatred, violence, and scorn particularly on its Christian citizens. Paul's counsel about peace, praise, and gratitude was a survival manual for people who lived in a tumultuous world.

Songwriter Allan Roberts wrote the often-recorded song "You Always Hurt the One You Love." What aspects of your history and temperament make "the peace of Christ" particularly important for you in your closest relationships? *The Message* renders verse 16, "Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house." How can you live that out?

Verse 17 took in a lot of ground: "WHATEVER you do, whether in speech or action, do it ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus." What does it mean to you to do whatever you do in Jesus' name? How can you work, shop, drive, react to today's news, cheer for your kid's soccer team, make holiday plans, and even wrestle with your faith "in the name of the Lord Jesus"?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to see reasons to say "thank you" no matter what comes my way today. Let your peace more and more control my heart and my words. Amen.*

**Thursday: James 3:14-17**

James devoted a good part of his letter to the effects, positive and negative, of

our speech and the inner sources from which that speech springs. He noted that "bitter jealousy and selfish ambition" can wreck any relationship, including those in a family. But he was equally convinced that true wisdom comes "from above," and that divine wisdom will surely shape our souls in ways that create peaceful, generous living. Scholar William Barclay noted, "There is a kind of person who is undoubtedly clever, with acute brain and skillful tongue; but his effect, nevertheless, in ... any group, is to cause trouble and to disturb personal relationships. It is sobering thing to remember that the wisdom he possesses is devilish rather than divine." Have you ever known (or been) a person like that? What does it take to turn that kind of intelligence and skill in speech to more positive purposes? Barclay also observed that the true wisdom described in verse 17 "at all times brings men closer to one another and to God." What are some of the daily practices that most help you to remember and internalize "the wisdom from above"? In what ways can you sense that wisdom reshaping your life and relationships for the better?

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, too many times already my own wisdom has let me down and hurt me and people I love. Keep sending me your wisdom from above and keep me receptive and open to it. Amen.*

**Friday: Ephesians 4:25-32; Psalm 19:9-14**

We might expect the passage in Ephesians to say, "Never get angry." Instead, we find that it said, "Be angry without sinning." Then, as though realizing that "be angry without sinning" might be just a bit vague ("How do I do that?"), Paul added this timeless relational advice: "Don't let the sun set on your anger," or, as *The Message* puts it, "Don't go to bed angry." Anger, in itself, is not bad—it is one of four basic human emotions. We can be angry without sinning. Ephesians also connected the topic of anger with teaching about honesty. When have you seen a failure to honestly face anger (your own or someone else's) be destructive to a relationship? Anger becomes risky when we let it fester and don't deal with it directly. One counselor said, "Bitterness is anger grown stale." How good are you at recognizing your own anger, and then promptly dealing constructively and honestly with it?

*Prayer: Dear God, give me the courage to speak truth in love, the humility to say I'm sorry when I'm wrong and the heart to forgive others who admit a wrong. Amen.*

**Saturday: Romans 8:12-17**

We are all part of a family. That is something we all have experienced. Birth family, adoptive family, stepfamily, foster family, chosen family. Family determines so much of who we are, whether we're talking genes or experience, family of origin or the people we now call family. But we are also all part of God's family—children of God, says Paul. Loving, supportive, accepting, encouraging, helping. That sounds easier than it is. Because real life is made up of real people, we usually act like real people. Meaning: imperfect, flawed people. We gather together, greet each other with good words and handshakes

and hugs, hear one another's joys and worries and pain, pray for each other with thanksgiving and intercession, confess our sins together, experience forgiveness together, enjoy and encourage the children, and we laugh together. *Together.* That's the operative word. Together, we can be so much more and do so much more than we can alone. Together. God's family. All of us.

*Prayer: Heavenly Parent, help me learn from you how to live in your family. Amen.*