

Introduction: The difference “a word” makes

- *“A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”*

Proverbs 25:11 (NIV)

- *“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.”*

Proverbs 10:11 (NIV)

- *“The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.”*

Proverbs 15:4 (NIV)

Four ways to “speak life” to those you love:

1. Bestow a **blessing**...

2. Express your **appreciation**...
 - ...for who they are

 - ...for what they've done

3. Verbalize your **confidence** in their faith...

4. Affirm the **impact** their life has had...
 - ...on you

 - ...on others

Paul models encouraging words:

1. Paul's **Blessing** –

¹ Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

2. Paul's **Appreciation** –

² We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.

³ We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Paul's **Confidence** in their faith –

⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

4. Paul's **Affirmation** of their impact –

⁷And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

⁸The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

⁹for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Conclusion = two reminders:

- We grossly underestimate the awesome power of an “affirming word.”
- We grossly underestimate how deeply those around us are hurting.

Application:

Who needs “An Affirming Word” from you today?

Discussion Questions:

1. Share a time when someone deeply encouraged you by what they said (or wrote).
2. Why is it so important to constantly encourage one another? (read Hebrews 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
3. At which of the four ways of “speaking life” to others are you best?
4. Is there anyone with whom you struggle to use positive words of life?
5. What specific steps could you take to allow God to further develop your ability to speak words of life to those around you?