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# A SOUND FOR SORE EARS

PSALM 12



“Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Really? Whoever says that has never been bullied. A few years ago, a study conducted by research psychologists at Purdue University, Indiana, found that memories of painful emotional experiences linger far longer than those involving physical pain. The researchers quizzed people about painful events in the previous five years and found that it was much easier for people to relive, re-experience, and re-suffer from social pain than from physical pain. So what do we do when words have wounded us? We turn to the healing Word of God as the Psalmist did in Psalm 12.

## LEARNING

### THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER FROM THE WORDS OF THE WICKED (1-4)

“**Save, O Lord, for the godly one is gone; for the faithful have vanished from among the children of man**” (1). Wherever David looked, the wicked were increasing while the godly were decreasing. Wicked words were multiplying while godly words were shrinking.

What’s so bad about that? In contrast with the truthful, sincere, and genuine words of the godly, the wicked’s words were characterized by lies, flattery, and a double heart. “**Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak**” (2-3). It was impossible to know when anyone was speaking the truth. But it didn’t stop there. Their tongue “**makes great boasts,**” they say, “**With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?**” (3-4). “Our tongues will triumph, our lips are Lord.” They had supreme confidence in the supremacy and success of their wicked words. It was agony to hear their triumphant talk.

STICKS AND STONES BREAK MY BONES,  
BUT WORDS BREAK MY HEART.

What words can heal our broken hearts?

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## THE RIGHTEOUS TRUST IN THE WORDS OF GOD (5-8)

The wicked have spoken, but now God speaks. **“Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the Lord; “I will place him in the safety for which he longs”** (5). How the psalmist welcomed these pure, powerful, protective words of God. **“The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times”** (6). The psalmist responded by repeating God’s protective promises in the midst of the wicked’s wounding words. **“You, O Lord, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever. On every side the wicked prowl, as vileness is exalted among the children of man”** (7-8).

GOD'S PURE WORD PROTECTS  
FROM THE WICKED'S PAINFUL WORDS.

LOVING

I found this Psalm wonderfully comforting in the light of the recent presidential election campaign. So much disgusting deception, so much horrible hypocrisy, so much agonizing arrogance, especially from the media. I needed to hear this Psalm and still do. It directs us to fill our heads and hearts with God’s protective Word to shut out wicked wounding words.

Psalms like this must have been frequently on the lips of Jesus when he lived in this wicked world and went through such painful physical and social suffering. And of course, he himself is the perfect Word of God, pure, **like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times**. We love him and we love his Word, especially when we feel hated with hateful words.

LIVING

Fill your heads and hearts with God’s healing Word to heal from the wicked’s wounding words.

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