

Strengthen your brethren in all your conversation

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Introduction

- I get to choose my own topic

Doctrine

- Matt 22:36-39
"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
This is the first and great commandment.
And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- John 13:34-35
"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.
By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
- Many aspects of loving one another – loving our neighbor
- A verse that tells us *how* we can do that
- D&C 108:7 (To Lyman Sherman)
"Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings"

"strengthen your brethren in all your conversation"

- What does that mean?
- First point out several things - suggest we do self examination (look in the mirror) and if it something we do we should take action and cease to do so
 - Because if we are doing these things then we are tearing down and not strengthening our brother or sister
- Point out ways we can strengthen

Put downs do not strengthen in conversation

- Much of the media we watch and listen to uses negative, cutting, or put down language for humor
 - I literally can not watch most TV shows, particularly comedies, because of this type of humor
- It has become fashionable in the work place and at schools to be considered witty and funny with clever put downs and cutting remarks
- It has become almost a form of peer pressure that we put down others

This type of humor and put downs can have powerful effects

- Mike Baird
"Dad and Grandpa Baird (personal experience)
- Mike Baird
"Ronnie Geller." (personal experience)

"Just Joking"

- Sometimes we try to cover our careless or thoughtless remarks with the phrase "I'm just joking" or "Just kidding" as if that makes what we said OK to say
- How do you feel when someone insults you or puts you down and is "just joking"
- If we ever find ourselves saying "just joking" then we shouldn't have said it in the first place
- What does it say about us if we have to drag someone down to be funny or look better ourselves, what does that indicate about our thoughts and heart?
- Is it something we can picture the savior doing?
- Think of the people who make us feel like we are somebody

Gossiping

- Gossip is another form of conversation that does not uplift but only tears down

Ceaseless pinpricking

- Another form of conversation that does not strengthen is constant criticism - President Kimball - ceaseless pinpricking
- Constant criticism (pinpricking – think of image) can deflate any relationship - marriage.
- Christ only perfect person
 - That means we all have married an imperfect person
 - That also means, and is harder to accept sometimes, is that our spouse's spouse is imperfect
- Robert Bierstedt

"The way we imagine ourselves to appear to another person is an essential element in our conception of ourselves. In other words, I am not what I think I am, and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.
- We all tend to be painfully aware of our weaknesses and don't need to be frequently reminded of them
 - Few people ever change from ceaseless pinpricking or nagging
 - Often it is best to let things be unsaid
 - GRAPEFUIT Syndrome
 - The Savior taught
 - Matt 7:3-5

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?
Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."
 - Spencer W Kimball

"If each spouse submits to frequent self-analysis and measures his own imperfections by the yardstick of perfection and the Golden Rule, and if each spouse sets about to correct self in every deviation found by such analysis rather than to set about to correct the deviations in the other party, then transformation comes and happiness is the result (*Marriage and Divorce*, p. 19)
 - Casting blame on others for problems in our marriage is an easy trap to fall into
 - We need to look inward to avoid the "Grapefruit Syndrome"

What do we do?

- Never criticize – particularly publicly
 - No such thing as constructive criticism
- Never say anything negative about your spouse
- Never put down anyone
- We offend the Spirit when we put down others, when we constantly criticize, speak negatively or in a derogatory manner to or of others
- For the Strength of Youth Pamphlet:
"Do not insult others or put them down, even in joking. Speak kindly and positively about others so you can fulfill the Lord's commandment to love one another. When you use good language, you invite the Spirit to be with you."
- Give compliments
 - Ever try to compliment Dana Dalton?
- Show gratitude
 - My experience in showing gratitude to the ward members
 - My experience with Alp Goldsmith
- Golden Rule - We should only say positive things of others
- Sum it up with
 - D&C 121:
"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;
By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile"
- Grateful for my ward family who is so kind to their bishop
- Grateful for Nancy who never criticizes me or whom I've ever heard say publicly criticize or speak negatively of me in spite of my many weaknesses
- It is a great desire of mine to follow the Savior and live the things I have spoken of today.

TESTIFY

The Grapefruit Syndrome

By Lola B. Walters

My husband and I had been married about two years—just long enough for me to realize that he was a normal man rather than a knight on a white charger—when I read a magazine article recommending that married couples schedule regular talks to discuss, truthfully and candidly, the habits or mannerisms they find annoying in each other. The theory was that if the partners knew of such annoyances, they could correct them before resentful feelings developed. It made sense to me. I talked with my husband about the idea. After some hesitation, he agreed to give it a try.

As I recall, we were to name five things we found annoying, and I started off. After more than fifty years, I remember only my first complaint: grapefruit. I told him that I didn't like the way he ate grapefruit. He peeled it and ate it like an orange! Nobody else I knew ate grapefruit like that. Could a girl be expected to spend a lifetime, and even eternity, watching her husband eat grapefruit like an orange? Although I have forgotten them, I'm sure the rest of my complaints were similar.

After I finished, it was his turn to tell the things he disliked about me. Though it has been more than half a century, I still carry a mental image of my husband's handsome young face as he gathered his brows together in a thoughtful, puzzled frown and then looked at me with his large blue-gray eyes and said, "Well, to tell the truth, I can't think of anything I don't like about you, Honey."

Gasp.

I quickly turned my back, because I didn't know how to explain the tears that had filled my eyes and were running down my face. I had found fault with him over such trivial things as the way he ate grapefruit, while he hadn't even noticed any of my peculiar and no doubt annoying ways.

I wish I could say that this experience completely cured me of fault finding. It didn't. But it did make me aware early in my marriage that husbands and wives need to keep in perspective, and usually ignore, the small differences in their habits and personalities. Whenever I hear of married couples being incompatible, I always wonder if they are suffering from what I now call the Grapefruit Syndrome.

The Grapefruit Syndrome (abbrev.)

As a newlywed, Sister Lola Walters read in a magazine that in order to strengthen a marriage, a couple should have regular, candid sharing sessions in which they would list any mannerisms they found to be annoying. She wrote:

“We were to name five things we found annoying, and I started off. ... I told him that I didn’t like the way he ate grapefruit. He peeled it and ate it like an orange! Nobody else I knew ate grapefruit like that. Could a girl be expected to spend a lifetime, and even eternity, watching her husband eat grapefruit like an orange? ...

“After I finished [with my five], it was his turn to tell the things he disliked about me. ... [He] said, ‘Well, to tell the truth, I can’t think of anything I don’t like about you, Honey.’

“Gasp.

“I quickly turned my back, because I didn’t know how to explain the tears that had filled my eyes and were running down my face.”

Sister Walters concluded: “Whenever I hear of married couples being incompatible, I always wonder if they are suffering from what I now call the Grapefruit Syndrome” (Ensign, Apr. 1993, p. 13).