

Endangered Life

Life Verses Small Group Devotional — Week 4

“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life.”

— Leviticus 19:16b, NIV

Read Leviticus 19:15–16 and Proverbs 18:21.

What we say to people matters.

What we say about people matters.

Our words can either promote or pervert justice. They can preserve or endanger lives through the actions or inactions they provoke. We truly have the power of life and death in the words we choose. Our words matter.

When we lie or exaggerate, promote hateful rhetoric or spread misinformation, or make false accusations or commit perjury, we endanger the lives of other people. We endanger our own lives and those of our loved ones.

These lives are threatened in the courtrooms and on our streets. Threatened by inequitable sentencing and wrongful convictions. By vigilante “justice” and the willful neglect of communities and their leaders.

Yet it is also through our words that we begin to form safer communities and societies. To make room for the stranger and provide shelter to the unhoused. To rescue the captive and protect the oppressed. To show honor to and to hold accountable those in authority.

May our words make the difference between life and death, and may we choose life.

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Use these questions to discuss and explore the Scripture and devotional reading.

Can you think of any examples of the guilty being found innocent due to lies and misinformation? Describe and discuss.

Can you think of any examples of the innocent being found guilty due to lies and misinformation? Describe and discuss.

Can you think of any examples of the guilty receiving harsher sentencing than another would have for the same or a more serious offense? Describe and discuss.

What are some ways that we can promote truth and equity in the administration of justice, whether in our homes, our non-profit and for-profit corporations, or our communities?