

# TOOL: Look for Affirmation

Speak blessing • Daily



## Introduction

Mark Twain famously said, "I can live for two months on a good compliment." That might be an overstatement, but this points to the power of a meaningful affirmation. To affirm is to see and acknowledge that which is praiseworthy in others. It could be noticing someone's gift, a well-timed compliment, or a word of appreciation.

Author Gary Chapman has made an indelible impact on relationships through his book, *The Five Love Languages*. In this work, Chapman shares the concept that there are five primary ways in which people receive love. It should be no surprise that one of those languages is to hear *words of affirmation*. This is not just creative psycho-social jargon. This is also biblical truth.

The power of our words and of affirmation is found throughout scripture. The first words humanity ever heard in the Garden were an affirmation: "You are very good." Proverbs 18:21 shares the weighty statement, "The tongue has the power of life and death..." The point is: our words are powerful – powerful to build up or to tear down. Hebrews 10:24-25 implores the Church, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

This is not just a slight suggestion. To affirm and encourage one another is a commandment.

- "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (1 Thess. 5:11)
- "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Eph. 4:29)

If we were to take seriously the call to faithfully follow the way of Jesus, we must learn to encourage one another. We were created to feel the power of affirmations. It is one of the ways in which we speak blessing to one another.

### **Pause and consider**

- Can you remember the last time you heard a well-timed compliment?
- What makes an affirmation powerful?
- Reread Hebrews 10:24-25. Notice how the Church is called to use the power of our words with one another. Are you currently living into this commandment?

### **Practice**

Consider the following practices you can enact today to affirm and encourage those around you.

- Affirmation can come in the form of written messages. Today, send five text messages - or better yet, five written notes - to those whom you want to affirm in their goodness, kindness, or mercy.
- In your interactions today, seek to bless people by giving compliments. When you see someone doing something that they are gifted in, say so. When you notice someone's character, point it out and affirm it to them.
- Sadly, some of those who rarely hear our affirmations are those we are closest to. We don't say words of appreciation or blessing because we feel as if it "goes without saying" or was already previously expressed. However, affirmation is an ongoing process. Say the words to those you are closest to - even if you think they already know it or have heard it in the past. Bless others with your affirmation.
- Look at your schedule for today (or if you are reading this at the end of a day, the schedule for tomorrow). Right now, consider how you can affirm and encourage those you will meet with. When you meet, listen for a moment where you could encourage and speak truth to their goodness.

## Debrief your experience

After practicing with this tool, debrief your experience with your Praxis Group. Below are some questions to process together:

- Check in on life. (Where are you experiencing Christ's presence this week? What burdens are you carrying?)
- What did you learn from this practice?
- Describe your experience with this practice. (What feelings came up, what went well, what got in the way? How has it impacted your relationship with God?)
- What is the next step for you?