Today, many use their tongues as sharp swords. This seems to add intrigue and destruction as the media and individuals do it. Call it bashing. The dictionary says to bash is to strike with a heavy, crushing blow.

Too many love to bash public servants, community, countries, family members, and churches. Too many children bash parents and many parents bash children.

We as Christians need to remember that the words "Nay, speak no ill" are more than a phrase but a recommended way of life. We need to be reminded more than ever before that "if there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." ...there's no time for the bashing.

Some think the only way to get even, to get attention or advantage, or to win is to bash people. This kind of behavior is never appropriate. Oftentimes character and reputation and almost always self-esteem are destroyed under the hammer of this vicious practice.

How far have we drifted from the simple teaching "If you can't say something good about someone or something, don't say anything".

Reports and rumors about misconduct and misbehavior are readily available and can make good ammunition for those who would injure, bash, or damage. But the Savior reminds us that he who is without sin may cast the first stone. Ugly reports and conversations are always available to those who would promote the sordid and sensational. None of us are yet perfect. We each have failings that aren't terribly difficult to detect—especially if that is the aim. Through microscopic examination one can find in almost every life incidents or traits that are destructive if magnified.

We need to get back to basic principles of recognizing the good and the praiseworthy. Reemphasize positive family time. Use it as a tool or foundation for wholesome communication and teaching, but never as an opportunity to bash other family members, neighbors, teachers, or Church leaders. Family loyalty will emerge when we reinforce the good and the positive and bridle negative thoughts as we look for the good.

Jesus Christ, the only perfect person to ever walk the earth, taught us through quiet example to say nothing or to be silent in stressful times in our lives rather than to spend time and energy bashing for whatever purpose. In fact, he had some tough suggestions for those who call each other fools. He said that if we felt someone trespassed against us, we should try to work it out with the person, then if needed include one or two more. (What a difference from the use of the courts today!)

Replace bashing with kindness. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all....Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever."

Charity is, perhaps, in many ways a misunderstood word. We often equate charity with visiting the sick, taking in casseroles to those in need, or sharing our excess with those who are less fortunate. But really, true charity is much, much more. Real charity is not something you give away; it is something that you acquire and make a part of yourself.

The greatest charity comes when we are kind to each other, when we don't judge or categorize someone else, when we simply give each other the benefit of the doubt or remain quiet. Charity is accepting someone's differences, weaknesses, and shortcomings; having patience with someone who has let us down; or repressing the impulse to become offended when someone doesn't handle something the way we might have hoped. Charity is refusing to take advantage of another's weakness and being willing to forgive someone who has hurt us. Charity is expecting the best of each other.

Not one of us needs one more person bashing or pointing out where we have failed or fallen short. Most of us are already well aware of the areas in which we are weak. What each of us does need is family, friends, employers, and brothers and sisters who support us, who have the patience to teach us, who believe in us, and who believe we're trying to do the best we can, in spite of our weaknesses.

Whatever happened to giving each other the benefit of the doubt? Whatever happened to hoping that another person would succeed or achieve? Whatever happened to rooting for virtues of love, compassion, forgiveness, and long-suffering—those qualities that help us to deal with each other more compassionately?

"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3:18.) "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." (James 3)

If we could look into each other's hearts and understand the unique challenges each of us face, I think we would treat each other much more gently, with more love, patience, tolerance, and care.

Be one who nurtures and builds. Be one who has an understanding and forgiving heart, who looks for the best in people. Leave people better than you found them.