

## *Are You Shooting Them or Sowing Them?*

*By: Brother Rick*



My name is Brother Rick Mahorney. I am 47 years old and sentenced to a term of 40 years to life for armed robbery. Since this is my third prison term, I was sentenced under California's "Three Strikes You're Out" law. At the time of my arrest in December 2006, I was an unemployed, alcoholic, former an Assistant Pastor of a Pentecostal Church fallen from grace. I had served the Lord faithfully for 14 of the 17 years I had spent out of prison, but walked out of the church one Sunday evening hurt, offended, spiritually wounded and walked into a bar and left my precious relationship with the Lord at the door.

I hold no one to blame other than myself for my present circumstance. I made the decisions to walk away from my family, my brothers and sisters in the Lord, my church and my God. I allowed the enemy of our souls to use words spoken by a loved one who had good intentions to bring me down. Since then, I have turned into the Lord's embrace again, who never left me, but held His nail-scarred hands out to me. All I had to do is change direction spiritually and there He was.

I know there are others who have been hurt by words and the enemy has torn apart their lives because of them. I have a message to you if you're one of those: **THE ONLY WORDS THAT MATTER ARE HIS WORDS!** Don't allow satan to use the weapon of "vocabulary" to destroy God's purpose for your life. I also have a message for those who would feel the need to advise or criticize: "You can offer your words to others as bullets or as seeds. You can shoot them or sow them," Richard Halverson writes. Words used as bullets will kill inspiration, motivation and possibly keep you from leading someone to salvation. Words used as seeds will take root, grow and produce fruit in the life in which they are planted.

We can say the right words sometimes, but use the wrong manner to say them. God's words are wasted when we use a "ram-it-down-your-throat" approach. Christian's especially, have got to learn how to say the right thing, the right way. Isaiah 50:4 says, "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary..." (NKJV). To accomplish the desired effect in someone's heart, the words we use must be the right words – spoken with the right attitude.

We can't help others move up higher in Christ if we don't approach them with genuine love and care. Without those two crucial elements, efforts to help others will fail, or even worse, totally alienate them. Most of the men at this prison already know what their problem is; they've been dealing with it long enough. Deep down they want to do better. But unless I want a "who-are-you-to-tell-me?" response, I have to demonstrate a genuine concern. "Pleasant words are like a honey-comb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24). Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) His truth will always set people free, but if they refuse to listen to the truth, the way we're sharing it, maybe we're firing bullets instead of planting seeds. We all need to desire to be God's gardeners and not satan's snipers!