

Out of the Overflow of the Heart
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In computer programming, we had a term called GIGO: Garbage In, Garbage Out. The Scriptures put it this way, “Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.” Basically, it means that our words portray what our heart is full of. If we take garbage in, we’ll put garbage out. If we fill up with good things, then good things flow out from us.

At the end of World War II, the city of Berlin was divided up by the allies. The East Berliners, in what was to become Communist Berlin, drove a dump truck filled with garbage over to the west side, dumped it out and then they drove away.

The people from West Berlin figured that two could play at that game, and initially planned to scoop up all of the garbage and dump it right back on the east side. That would have been my first thought. But the people of West Berlin, after further considerations, came up with a different response. They got a dump truck, but instead of filling it with garbage, they filled it with canned goods and non-perishable food items. They drove the truck over to the east side of Berlin, stacked all the food neatly, and put a sign beside it that stated, “Each gives what he has to give.” What a witness! What they did had more of an impact than any retaliation could have affected. The Scriptures tell us, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” The West Berliners overcame evil with good, and I imagine there were some East Berliners who felt the burning coals!

“Each gives what he has to give.” The question we need to ask ourselves is what are we giving people? We give to others what we’ve been storing up; a result of what we’ve been reading, listening to, and watching. It’s a result of who we’ve been hanging with, what we’ve been laughing at, and what we text or do on the internet all the time.

What was true in Berlin then is true for us today. People around us have enough garbage dumped on them. Why not make the choices and changes in our lives that will enable us to leave a stack of goodies? There’s no telling the impact it might have.