

Before the Lesson

Read the Scriptures and overview below before your LIFE Group meets.

Scripture passages: James 3:1-12, 1 Peter 2:1-12 and 21-25, Galatians 5:16-26

The tongue ... it can be “a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” It can bless or curse, speak life or death, bring joy or cause pain, promote peace or stir up strife. If left unbridled, it has the horsepower to destroy relationships, speak lies, spread rumors, reveal pride, manipulate, boast, and deceive. Our speech can be our most deadly weapon of mass destruction. What causes it to manifest such horrific results? The core of man – the heart. But how do we change our heart condition, thus changing our speech? How do we keep such a deadly tool from becoming sharper and sharper as it wounds and cuts those around us? This week we will examine our speech and discover the complications that arise as a result of a broken bridle, a faulty rudder, and a burning ember.

Focus question: What does your speech say about the condition of your heart?

Group Discussion

- Read James 3:1-12. Discuss the three analogies given in verses 3-6 that describe the power of the tongue.
 - Horse and bridle
 - Ship and rudder
 - A small fire
- Give examples of how your speech can do the following?
 - Encourage/discourage
 - Build a relationship/kill a relationship
 - Speak truth/speak lies
 - Build a person's character/destroy a person's reputation
 - Display humility/expose pride
- Why are leaders held to a higher level of accountability with regard to the usage of speech?
- We all lead someone. How can you use your voice to positively influence a co-worker, a neighbor, a child, a friend? (Be specific.)
- Read Matthew 12:33-37. What is the core issue behind our speech?
- It is said that what goes in a person comes out of a person. Think about what goes into your heart and mind. Are there any adjustments that need to be made? What can you do to transform your heart into a wellspring of life? (See Psalm 1, Psalm 119:9-11, 103, Proverbs 4:23, Romans 12:1-2.)

- Pride, anger, and fear are three emotions that greatly influence our heart. How have you seen each of these emotions cause you to use improper speech? (Give examples.)
- The tongue is untamable (James 3:8) by human capabilities. How can it be tamed? What weapons can we use to bring the tongue into submission?
- Read the following verses. What do they say about our speech?
 - Psalm 37:30, 39:1, 141:3
 - Proverbs 12:18-19, 15:1, 17:28, 18:21, 21:23
 - Colossians 4:6
- Read 1 Peter 2:1-12.
 - What do you learn about speech from this passage?
 - What do you learn about the maturity of a believer?
 - Who are we to look to for help?
 - As a royal priesthood, what are we to do? (verse 9)
 - What are we to abstain from? (verse 11)
- Read 1 Peter 2:21-25. Relate the heart and the tongue to Christ's example of suffering and speech.
- Galatians 5:16-26 speaks to the heart of our problem with the tongue. Our fleshly desires contaminate our hearts and cause us to walk in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. How can we keep our hearts pure and undefiled so that we are operating in the Spirit's power rather than in our fleshly nature?
- Who have you influenced recently, either positively or negatively, by the power of your words? Who will you influence this week, and will you speak life or death into them?

Further Study (to be used in your personal Quiet Time)

Review Proverbs 15:28 and practice "thinking" before you speak this week.

True?

Honest?

Important?

Necessary?

Kind?

See also Philippians 4:8 and Matthew 5:1-12. Meditate on these principles. How can these heart-related truths help train and tame your tongue?

Pray Psalm 19:14 and 141:3 this week to help you tame your tongue and guard your speech.

For additional resources, visit warrenlifenotes.com.