

## Truths About My Tongue

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## Truths About My Tongue - Lesson 1: *My Terrible Tongue* - James 3:1-12

In this 4-part series will be looking at what God says about our communication

### **A Theology of Speech:**

#### ***Communication and speech started with God Himself***

God pronounces nothing into something (Gen 1) – through His spoken Word!

God reveals Himself perfectly to us through His prophets and apostles and His Word

2 Tim 3:16-17 *16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

God truthfully communicates with His creation to reveal Himself and His purposes –

God's speech has always been, and always will be...PERFECT, REDEMPTIVE, HOLY WORDS!

#### ***Speech was corrupted in the Garden***

Enter in the Serpent, Satan, a deceiver & liar, who corrupted speech: "Did God really say?" Satan challenged God's authority and Adam and Eve fell prey to his lies and deceit. Since that time every man has been beset to speak and propagate sinful words and speech. We are familiar with the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me". And yet we know by experience that whether it's slander, lying, gossip, angry words, hateful words...some of the greatest hurts and pains in life are the result of thoughtless and careless words.

#### ***Believers can use their words for redemptive purposes***

And yet as believers the Scriptures inform us that we can also use our words and speech for redemptive purposes – for the good of others, through the power of the Holy Spirit as we yield our heart and will for God's glory. All of us can recall words of encouragement or a reminder of God's promises, or a timely rebuke that addresses our sin from the lips of another person. In those times God is glorified in what is said and done.

In this first lesson we turn to 12 verses of Scripture where James zeros in on the subject of our tongue...our speech. The passage, James 3:1-12, could be called the "Mother Ship" passage in the New Testament that is an exposé of man's sinful tongue. The subject matter here is *not* flattering. James goes into "shock and awe" mode on us. With a relentless series of truths James will hammer the nail on the head and he will keep beating and beating on it, going to great lengths to show the magnitude of our battle with sin that comes from your tongue. And I believe James goes to this extent, at least in part, because we don't really believe this "tongue thing" is a very big deal – or if it is, it's not a problem of mine. With humble hearts, let's allow James to set the record straight.

### **Key thoughts:**

*The battle with my sin and my striving to be Christlike is advanced greatly when I understand and address the sinfulness of and the power wielded by my own tongue*

**James 3:1-12** *(1) Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. (2) For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. (3) If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. (4) Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. (5) So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, (8) but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (9) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? (12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.*

## **5 Warnings from James about The Terrors of My Tongue**

### **1. Reconsider Becoming a Teacher (James 3:1)**

*(1) Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*

This first verse is quite telling and insightful. Here we have an extended passage on the sinfulness of our tongues and James starts with teachers. James puts a restriction on the quantity of teachers where the number of teachers is regulated in their churches. By inference it is apparent that among these gatherings of believers that some were aspiring to teach, and now James responds to this interest.

The word for teacher (Gr *didaskalos*) is the same word for master or rabbi and indicates a recognized teacher. James is specifically addressing teachers that instruct in gatherings in public and in church, emphasizing a heightened priority for those who speak on God's behalf. This command may seem strange because teachers are always needed. We as Christians desperately need to hear truth, to preach the Word in season and out of season. Teachers are absolutely necessary to proclaim God's truth! And yet James raises a caution flag with an imperative command not to rush here! Consider that other spiritual gifts don't have this restriction. It wouldn't make sense to say, "Not many of you should serve" or "Not many should be hospitable"! With this restriction on teachers, James highlights very real potential of causing greater harm to the body.

Now let's think about this: James' point is not to turn away all new and true teachers but rather to consider its seriousness. The Bible commends faithful teachers and encourages the sharing and teaching of truth.

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,  
a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15

Note the emphasis that Paul puts on approval *before God* in the handling of His truth. There is a real temptation for teachers to stand in the public eye for attention, prestige, and honor *from men*. This accountability before God is where James goes and is why you must reconsider the role of teacher.

*(1) Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers,  
for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*

Speaking on behalf of God as a recognized teacher is scrutinized closely by God and therefore brings great potential to bring judgment on oneself. There's a stricter accountability for the teacher when one stands before God one day. And so, this command is for your good and for the good of one's hearers.

This restriction on those who speak on God's behalf and ensuing judgment is consistent in the Bible. Moses speaks of a future prophet, Jesus Christ, and fulfilled in the New Testament (Acts 3:22).

*I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers.  
And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.  
And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name,*

*I myself will require it of him.*

Deuteronomy 18:18-19

And then Moses goes on to tell of the false prophet and the strict judgment that will come:

*But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.'*

Deuteronomy 18:20

In Matthew, Jesus also states that of every word of ours will one day be judged, and therefore all of our speech should be taken seriously – our communication is no small matter before God.

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account  
for every *careless word* they speak,  
Matthew 12:36

As an application of these truths, we would be foolish to not consider how this command from James clearly applies to anyone that is teaching or instructing or influencing others through any number of mediums, including social media, where it is very easy to self-appoint oneself and start one's own platform to "broadcast yourself". Whether that is Facebook, or Tik-Tok, or Instagram, or Blogs and podcasts, or any other medium – especially where there is advice or direction given in moral areas, or speaking on behalf of God – James is saying to beware of taking the mantle of "Expert", or "Influencer", or the pursuit of a reputation as "the answer guy". We can so loosely and casually and quickly air out our advice and opinions in the public world of social media without a hesitation! James says we must hesitate! Careless words will be judged by God.

I am young and I desire to teach, so where do I start? How do I do it right? Consider Romans 15:14:

*I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.*

Romans 15:14

- 1) Realize God encourages good and godly teachers in various settings.  
This includes both men and women in their proper contexts (see Titus 2:3-5)
- 2) Don't be in a hurry  
Full of goodness = mature walk; all knowledge = know Word; able = ability
- 3) Commit to being a student and disciple of Word  
Grow in your knowledge and proper interpretation of Scripture. Speaking about false teachers (1 Tim 1:3-7), Paul says to Timothy in verse 7: *desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.* We need to avoid being this kind of teacher who is ignorant of the truth of Scripture.
- 4) Immerse self in local church  
Pastors equip saints for works of ministry and this includes teachers! And in a healthy church, pursue discipleship relationships with a more mature person that will help you grow.
- 5) Develop a more mature, disciplined tongue; find teaching venues under the guidance of your pastors
- 6) Put off the desire for a public platform of influence with an audience far and wide
- 7) Instead, pursue growth by being a faithful instrument of good and Godly advice at a personal level: encourage, reprove, and share gospel truths among your circle of friends, co-workers, and family. And those who are faithful with the little things, God is faithful to reward with greater.

And James will now give us "the ugly" on the tongue: the undeniable reasons why there should not be many teachers.

## 5 Warnings from James about The Terrors of My Tongue

### **2. Don't underestimate the powerful influence of your little tongue (James 3:2-4)**

(2) *For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.*

“For” or “because” points us to the reasons for James’ command to reconsider role of teacher.

Stumble = (Greek *patio*) = “to err, make a mistake, to sin, to fall into misery” and serves as a metaphor for sinning. Saying we “stumble in many ways” essentially means there are many ways that Christians can sin in our body, speaking to the complete depravity of our entire self. And we can relate to this! Now get this next statement...so important!

(2) *For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.*

James goes from general “stumble in many ways” to the specific “stumble in what he says”. Everyone will stumble and sin in many ways, but if you don’t sin with your tongue you won’t stumble in many ways. Why is this? Because a more mature person who has greater control of his tongue is then able to prevent the other parts of his body from sinning!

(2) *For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.*

“Perfect man” may refer to “sinless”, where such a hypothetical person would have a perfect tongue. But this more than likely refers to a spiritual maturity. The more spiritually mature have greater control of their speech than the less mature. These truths are quite profound: when you gain greater control of your tongue you will have greater control of your entire body. Those with more disciplined speech have greater discipline of their life. Those who sin less with the tongue will be those who sin less in other areas. Why is this? James uses the tongue to represent a person’s sinfulness or depravity. The tongue is described here as a personification of my fallenness and wickedness. The center stage of human depravity is exemplified by the mouth – one’s speech. Your mouth is the spokesperson of your sinfulness/sin nature. The tongue of sinful man puts on display your wickedness and depravity and all its ugliness.

*Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.  
The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.  
Romans 3:13-14*

Think of it like this: The mouth is the exhibit that communicates state of the human condition.

*The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.  
Luke 6:45*

There is a principle here: My mouth is the door to the contents of my heart. My speech opens the door to the closet within to disclose what’s stored inside. With this in mind I should ask myself, “What *do* I talk about? What is the *content* of my speech?” Those things or individuals that are most cherished and revered will invariably come out in my speech.

1. Important that I take note of the content of my own speech.  
Psalm 39:1 says, “*I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue...*”
2. Important that I listen to speech of others – these are ministry opportunities

To emphasize the importance of this principle “control the tongue, control the body” James gives two analogies:

*(3) If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. (4) Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.*

The tongue is small but mighty! A powerful, wild, volatile horse can be made to obey a small person like me by simply a little tug on the bit in the horse’s mouth. The point is the control of something bigger than yourself with something seemingly insignificant. To add to the point, James adds the analogy of a ship in verse 4 that will be driven by winds and current with great force and momentum, and yet can be steered in different directions with the maneuvering of a very small rudder “wherever the will of the pilot directs”. It is all about controlling something bigger than self (whole body) with something seemingly insignificant (tongue). An underlying principle is the tongue is so influential that it must be controlled. Therefore, if you are serious about spiritual growth – you must get serious about your tongue. The tongue is small but mighty, and yet it wields significant influence.

### **5 Warnings from James about The Terrors of My Tongue**

#### **3. Don’t miscalculate your tongue’s ability to cause great harm (James 3:5-6)**

There are many reasons James gives to make his point that an uncontrolled, sinful tongue has the ability to create great harm and destruction. He goes in “overkill mode” to make it abundantly clear.

*(5) So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.*

James gives us several Descriptions of the Tongue that Communicate its Dangerous Influence:

A) The tongue is deceptively powerful to create havoc

Verse 5a: Tongue is “small”, but “boasts of great things” – presents a contrast to us  
The tongue is small – tiny member of the body –thus tongue/speech often overlooked  
And yet there is the potential for great destruction through this small instrument.

Verse 5b “How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!”

A forest fire analogy communicates devastating destruction that is out of control.

Seemingly insignificant words can be said so rashly and result in ruinous consequences:

Reputations can be lost, relationships ruined, vengeful words can result in hate/harm/murder.

You may have received regular, embittering words from a parent or perhaps the last words you said to your parents were hurtful/disrespectful/damaging. The point is that great devastation comes from sinful, unchecked talk, so don’t overlook its potential

B) Verse 6a: James uses a metaphor of “fire” again (3 times for emphasis) to describe the tongue.

A spark lights a small fire that spreads, and grows, and destroys – it is intense and hurtful!

Hateful words, gossiping words, lying words, deceitful words, angry words - destruction!

*A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.*

Proverbs 16:27

*For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.*

*As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.*

Proverbs 26:20-21

C) Verse 6b Tongue = a World of Unrighteousness/Iniquity – (cosmos/world – “system of evil”).

The tongue is described here as a world of trouble - it creates incalculable harm as sin harms

The evil of all the world is at the fingertips of the tongue – like the spokesperson of

all wickedness and sin – ready to convey and promote any and all sin. And therefore consider:

- I express sin of hate with hurtful and unkind words about someone
- I’m engaged in sexual immorality by coarse jokes, sexual innuendos, sensual words
- I commit sin of revenge with biting comebacks or put-downs or slander
- I sinfully fear man by lying or using my words deceptively to present something untrue
- Your “digital tongue” can also sin greatly with the messages I send from my keyboard or my smartphone.

D) Verse 6c *The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.*

“Staining” = to pollute or contaminate (with permeating smoke). The hurtful effects of a sinful tongue are far reaching in our personal life. Don’t miss this: the havoc and chaos and disharmony in your life may very well be traced back to the words of your tongue!

E) Verse 6d *The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.*

“Entire course of life” = “sphere of influence” – your speech affects all of your life. Proverbs 12:18 says, “*There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*” Sinful words bring hurt and harm, but godly words bring healing. In rage you may say, “I will never forgive you for what you’ve done!”, and then you carry other sins to back it up: pride, unkindness, bitterness, unforgiveness, regret, seared conscience, anxiety, drugs, alcohol...etc. And the course of life is damaged. Consider a married man who makes complimentary statements of another woman’s (not his wife) appearance. A world of unrighteousness can be unleashed – motives, thoughts, communication, actions are set in motion by these very words – always at the genesis of sexual sin and other lasting consequences.

F) Verse 6e *The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.*

“Hell” is the king arsonist here, the initiator of the fire and resulting devastation. Demonic Forces have been given the reins of the tongue when we speak sinfully. Those with uncontrolled speech are essentially spokespeople for Satan. He then fuels and uses sinful words to promote ungodliness and sin. Sinful words just don’t merely fall on deaf ears - Satan fuels the fire.

## **5 Warnings from James about The Terrors of My Tongue**

### **4. My tongue is humanly untamable (James 3:7-8)**

*(7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, (8) but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

The tongue cannot be controlled, humanly speaking – control requires God’s power

Verse 7 – man has always been able to subdue the animal kingdom – granted in the Garden.

We can control the animal kingdom – we have power to do so – we use them, protect them, eat them, raise them, retain them, guard them. Man has the upper hand on other creatures.

Verse 8a *but no human being can tame the tongue.*

Mankind, able to subdue every creature of land or sea, big or small, mighty and dangerous, fast or slow, and yet man is captive to his own tongue. Talk about humble pie – striking humiliation!

Verse 8b *It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

Tongue = Restless = “unable to restrain” – an evil that cannot be subdued  
Deadly poison. A description to make you wary!

My tongue is humanly un-trainable. Without God’s divine help, it is a losing battle to control our tongues. Therefore, we must think about our tongues with a humble sobriety, not casually.

## **5 Warnings from James about The Terrors of My Tongue**

### **5. My Tongue’s Hypocrisy Highlights Its Brokenness (James 3:9-12)**

*(9) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? (12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.*

Verse 9 Bless God yet Curse Man – completely inconsistent

Man is made in God’s image – back to Genesis

In Christian settings we can speak religiously and complimentary of God and His children, and yet speak so unlovingly and hateful in the private confines of our home.

Verse 10 Inconsistency/Hypocrisy of Tongue is wrong – not meant to be – tongue is dysfunctional

Verses 11-12 Examples of inconsistencies that cannot exist, due to the nature of the item

		<u>Natural Outcome</u>	<u>Foreign Outcome</u>
1 Spring	2 inconsistent outcomes	Fresh Water	Salt Water
1 Fig Tree	2 inconsistent outcomes	Figs	Olives
1 Grapevine	2 inconsistent outcomes	Grapes	Figs
Salt Pond	2 inconsistent outcomes	Salt water	Fresh Water

In closing, let’s reconsider James’s words in verse 10: “these things ought not to be so”. James has stated his case loudly and clearly – the tongue is desperately broken. My tongue is a fire that is fueled by Hell itself – capable of such great destruction and harm! The entire course of our lives is affected by our words – and it is humanely untamable. I need to hit the pause button on the role of teacher. With these overwhelming truths on the sinfulness of my tongue, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ can be encouraged, realizing that forgiveness and the only source of power to empower the powerless, to give strength to weary.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus, I don’t have to settle for speech that is sinful and wreaking havoc. The Spirit of God empowers me to develop a tongue that is righteous and consistent, speaking words of healing, for God’s glory.

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20

Our next lesson will help us understand where we can focus our attention to grow in godliness in our speech.

## Truths about My Tongue – Lesson 2: *Getting to The Heart of My Speech*

### Key thoughts:

*My words (and actions) are an expression of my efforts to fulfill the desires of my heart.*

*What you say (or do) on the outside is a product of what rules on the inside.*

In other words, the Bible defines an inseparable tie between our words and our inward heart.

### Consider Matthew 12:33-37

*33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

Context: Jesus just performed a miraculous healing, with the one healed identifying Jesus as the Messiah. The pharisees then publicly attribute Jesus' power to Satan, blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This after all the evidences of Jesus' deity, the Jewish leaders outright reject Christ, revealing the true state of their hearts that were in need of radical conversion. The Pharisees, who were well respected as the religious teachers of the day, are rebuked by Jesus as incapable of speaking anything (truly) good (vs 34)! Why? Because of the wicked condition of their hearts. In this text Jesus declares the content of our speech reveals the true nature of our hearts. Jesus uses the analogy of fruit and trees to help us understand the nature of our speech and why we say the things that we do...whether that is good speech or bad. The quality of the fruit that a tree bears is a clear indicator of the condition of that tree. A healthy tree will bring forth plenteous and productive fruit. A bad tree won't. A direct connection. And therefore every "careless" word will be judged – "exhibit A" if you will – because it reveals the ultimate culprit – wickedness in the heart that voices its rebellion against God.

Jesus' declaration: *there's a direct correlation between the content of our speech and the condition of our heart.*

Our application: Don't ignore what proceeds from your lips. It's ironic: we will actually say, "Jesus only cares about my heart, not what I actually say." It is true: Jesus does care about your heart – He cares about it so much that He compels you to pay attention to those things that truly reveal your heart's condition – and here He says that the monitor of your heart is your speech – what proceeds from your mouth.

Consider these takeaways from Jesus' statements in Matthew 12:33-37

1<sup>st</sup> takeaway: *God cares about my words/speech (and therefore I cannot ignore them)*

Vs 36 *I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,*

Some of you may be tempted to think, as we cover a series on our speech:

Yeah...but these are just words – why all the big fuss? Aren't we just being legalistic here?

God says...NO! He does care about your talk...your communication...your words!

And you will give an account for them to God Himself!

2<sup>nd</sup> takeaway: *My tongue displays of the condition (and contents) of the heart.*

Vs 34-35 *34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.*

The tongue is the outward expression of what exists inwardly. The tongue is the spokesperson of our depravity – and what proceeds from the mouth comes from the heart. Unrighteous speech just gives away (the snitch) the sinful, sick condition of what is inside. And so, a man’s words will be judged knowing that his words reflect the condition of his heart. Therefore, we cannot take our words lightly because God takes them seriously.

*If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue  
but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.*

James 1:26

3<sup>rd</sup> takeaway: *To change my speech (to God’s glory) I must address my heart*

We say things that we wish we could take back...hurtful, angry, resentful, gossip, flattery...How do we change? It must go to the root – to the heart. Consider the dummy sitting on the lap of a ventriloquist and the smirk on the face of the dummy and all his sarcastic, demeaning words. Slapping the dummy won’t change his speech! Only addressing what controls the dummy will truly address the source of the speech - it’s the person whose lap the dummy is sitting on that needs attention! And so consider, when we desire change, we make the mistake of addressing outward behavior only – we polish up the outside. And in the end you get what we call a “Pharisee” – lifeless on the inside, and moral on the outside. God sees right through this...you may impress others around you with good works – but not God. Another way of saying this is: *If my heart is right, it will show up in my speech being right.*

The unbelieving world attempts similar approaches, wanting to change what comes out of the mouth (or other sins)...we focus exclusively on the outward behavior. And so we try speech techniques (like stapling fruit on a dead tree). At some level we can muster out some change – but real, lasting, God-honoring changes requires that we address the heart. But according to Jesus, a “soap in the mouth” approach to achieve lasting, God-glorifying change is the wrong approach. Developing a God-honoring tongue cannot be about speech therapy... Jesus tells us we need something deeper than the surface treatment...we need heart surgery. Lasting, real, fruitful, God-honoring change requires more than window-dressing. Righteous words aren’t just about saying the right things, it’s about being the right person. It is actually a pursuit...God wants you – all of you – and the sin we protect/want resists that! And so, we are not merely looking to perform behavior modification; we need lasting transformation. Sinners need new hearts; believers need transformed hearts –brings lasting, God-glorifying change. And that is GREAT news – because heart change is what God is committed to and specializes in.

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.*

*And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

Ezekiel 36:26-27

God has covenanted with His people – and in the promised new birth God promises to transform a heart of stone that is hard & rebellious & self-centered, and replace it with a heart of flesh that is sensitive and pliable and changeable through the work and power of the Spirit – all to God’s glory. So, let’s dig a little deeper into this heart thing, and how it relates to my speech:

Paul Tripp said it this way: *Word problems are always related to heart problems* (War of Words, P. 55)

Stated differently: *The sinfulness of my heart is always the source of the sinfulness of my speech.*

So, what is the heart? Spiritually speaking, the “heart” is a person’s “control center” or the inner-most center of man that contains our intellect and passions and motives. The heart is what motivates and directs our outward behaviors, including our speech. Your heart is the real you.

Solomon attests to the importance of the heart's condition, and the need to attend to it. To keep your heart means to pay attention to your heart or certainly not to ignore your heart.

*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*  
Proverbs 4:23

Let's consider a key passage that helps us understand the link between the heart and our behavior and make several observations:

*1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*  
James 4:1-3

Observation 1:

*There's an inseparable connection between the desires of my inward heart and my outward behavior*

Question:

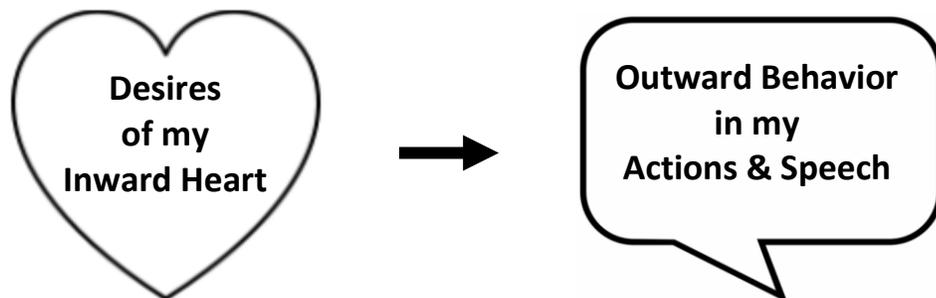
Vs 1a *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?*

"quarrels and fights" = a lot of visible "ugly", or outward, sinful behavior in both words and actions

Answer:

Vs 1b *Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*

The culprit to the outward, angry behavior is identified: it's my desires from within



Adapted from Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries

Notice what is going on here in the heart. There are passions and desires at work (we all know this!). James uses several words to describe these desires of the heart – to make his point clear.

Vs 1 *"passions (or pleasures) are at war within you"*

= Gr *hēdonē* = pleasure or desire for pleasure (BLB & Vines)

= experiencing pleasure for any reason and thus speaks of gratification & enjoyment (PA)

Vs 2a *You desire and do not have, so you murder.*

*"desire (or lust) and do not have"*

= Gr *epithymēō* = "to fix the desire upon" (Vines) = strong word for desire here – "set your heart upon, long for, lust after" (right or wrong) = "I really, really want this!"

Vs 2b *You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*

*"covet and cannot obtain" = Gr zēloō = to desire something earnestly (Vines)*

These words for desire and pleasure do have a negative connotation (self-serving). However, let's realize that desire or pleasure itself is not sinful (unless a moral issue). Desire itself is not the issue. This passage is not saying that all pleasure is sinful. We are not saying to live a holy life I must deny myself of all pleasure and repent of any enjoyment. We are not saying that all comforts & relaxation are self-centered and sinful.

Observation 2: *My desires are fighting for control in the battlefield of my heart*

Vs 1b *Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*

We get some clarification regarding these passions or desires – they are at war in our hearts. There is a literal spiritual battle going on inside (hearts); it is a battle for control. Secular psychology denies the reality of this spiritual battle. We must see this through God’s eyes. The apostle Paul eloquently speaks of this battle and we can so relate!

*18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

Romans 7:18-20

The war’s participants are simply defined:

1. When we yield to sinful, self-centered desires we get sinful, self-centered speech (and conduct)
2. When we yield to righteous, God-honoring desires it leads to pleasing & good speech (and conduct)

The nature of this spiritual battle with our passions is clarified in Verse 2 (next point)

Observation 3:

*I can discern if my desire is legitimate based on how I pursue its fulfillment or from my response when I don’t get it*  
Vs 2 *2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.*

Here is how I can know that my good desire has become a wrong desire:

Ask yourself 3 questions:

1. What do I desire or want?
2. Am I willing to sin to fulfill this desire?
3. Do I respond sinfully when this desire is unfulfilled?

This line of questioning helps us identify what Brad Bigney (Gospel Treason) and the Bible calls “Idols of the Heart”:

*Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts,  
and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces.*

Ezekiel 14:3a

*An idol is anything or anyone that begins to capture our hearts, minds, and affections more than God*

Brad Bigney

2021 Truth & Light Conference, Timberlake Baptist Church

Idols of the heart can be described as root sins, or “the sin behind the sin”. Consider how the same circumstances will yield completely different responses, and how the response, whether good or bad, is dictated by the ruling desires in the heart. It’s the wee hours of morning at a Liberty University dorm and a fire alarm goes off in the middle of night, with everyone required to exit the building in freezing cold temperatures. Consider how these 3 people respond so differently to the very same circumstances:

1<sup>st</sup> person – has a hissy fit because there’s a big test she’s been freaking out over and even went to bed early for rest.

Under your breath are choice words %&#! I hate dorm life/school/life! *Why would you allow this, God?*

2<sup>nd</sup> person – wow – I get to see the one I am dating again today, who lives on the floor below.

I cherish every minute with him...this is surely “a God-moment...Oh for a ring in the spring!”

3<sup>rd</sup> person – he/she prays: “Oh Lord, work in the person’s heart that pulled that fire alarm”.

There are those here whose life is going in wrong direction...soften them and turn them to You by your grace.

Here's the point: the very same circumstances create several different reactions, all based on one's desires of the heart. My circumstances, good or bad, are not the root issue to sinful outward behaviors! Jesus directs us to the heart – and James specifically to our internal desires – these are the key. Now to tie our heart desires to our words...

*Our words are shaped by the dream that resides in our hearts.* Paul Tripp (War of Words, P. 101)

We need to identify the sin behind the sin, identifying the ruling desires of my heart.

Ask, "Why did I say what I said?" or "Why did I say what I said in such a horrible manner?"

"Why do I gravitate and give into telling and hearing gossip?"

"Why can't I control swearing in a fit of anger?"

"Why do I complain/whine/vent when faced with a less than ideal situation?"

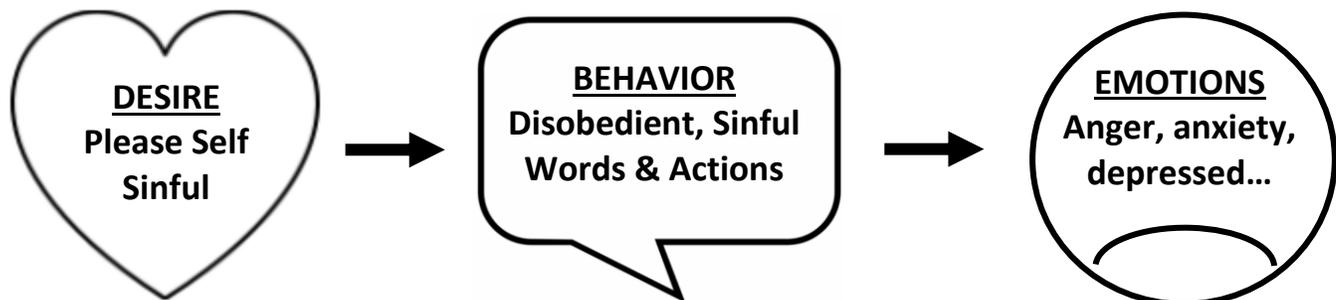
"Why do I pour on flattering words of insincere praise to someone?"

Next time you say something out of line, sinful speech – anger, complaining, swearing...ask yourself:

*What am I desiring so much that I will sin to get (or keep) it, or sin when I don't get it?*

So, we must make the connection: Our tongues tattle on our hearts. Address the heart and you'll address the tongue. My speech will progressively grow in godly speech when I turn my heart to God, day by day – that's sanctification!

We can take this a step further to also consider our emotions and feelings. If we're honest with ourselves, we are individuals that often make our decisions, including our speech, based on feelings. We have a tendency to be feeling-oriented – and that gets us into trouble. We must evaluate our feelings in the light of Scripture, with objective truth.



Adapted from Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries

Desires, even inherently good desires, that we want too much are idolatrous desires. Our tongues reveal self-serving desires that we desperately try to preserve and protect. This results in emotional responses that are painful, distressing, hurtful – especially when we're denied. So, we put on band-aids to get this right – clean up act, change words – moralistic endeavors. These won't resolve the true matter...and therefore we take an aspirin to sooth the hurt instead of the surgery that we so desperately need - anger management classes, perhaps a little yoga or meditation, a big bowl of your fav ice cream, behavior modifications...rather than pursuing the matters of the heart. Treat your emotions as warning light – identify the heart desire that's not being fulfilled – address that.

So, ask yourselves these questions:

*Are my ambitions God's ambitions?*

*Am I striving to orient my life in God's direction, or mine?*

*Is it all about God blessing my plans, or am I steering my life to arrange into God's grand plan for me?*

*So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.*

2 Corinthians 5:9

This aim...pleasing Christ...must be the desire that increasingly wins the day in this battle of control in my heart. This is the substance of the Christian life...to make it your aim to please Christ. Our sanctification includes a fundamental re-orientation of our life – our desires – our time – centered around the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.



Adapted from Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries

James 1:25 declares you will be blessed in your doing – obedience brings blessing! This is not a trouble-free life, nor a life of comfort and ease; but a life that is well pleasing, transcending circumstances with a joy that defies human logic.

Here are some parting instructions on what to do with your heart

1. Pray to God, inviting Him to reveal the desires that are idols of your heart  
 Psalm 139:23-24 *23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!  
 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*  
 What have I been believing that is a lie? What do I value or prize most?  
 What am I pursuing that I want so desperately? What am I idolizing (worshipping)?  
 What am I making too much of? What good thing am I loving too much?
2. Know and trust God's Words as the only reliable source of identifying ruling desires  
 Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions (desires) of the heart.*  
 Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, allowing God to use the light of His Word to put a spotlight on your sin.
3. Evaluate your choice of words in unfavorable circumstances  
 You can pray something like this...*"O Lord, use the circumstances in my life to reveal the condition of my heart – to reveal my ruling desires – to listen to my words that expose the true master in that moment...and anything that has taken precedence or priority over You or Your ways I give to you today...I submit it to you...and accept and receive the forgiveness and cleansing that comes through the work of Christ on my behalf."*  
 Listen to David's prayer when he recognized the close association with his words and his heart, in Psalm 19:14 – *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*
4. Loosen your grip on your idolatrous desires, and tighten your grip on Christ  
 We must embrace Christ – He must be our first love – He must be all we live for!  
 This is the work of putting off idols, and putting on Christ – the work of confession & repentance  
 Psalm 39:1 "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue..."
5. Give a green light for others to speak into your life  
 Hebrews 3:12-13 *(12) Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. (13) But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*  
 O Lord, give me a humble heart...allowing you to use others to expose areas of blindness and weakness in my life.

## Truths about My Tongue – Lesson 3: *Identifying Destructive Words and Their Sinful Roots*

### Key thoughts:

*Identify the specific sins of your tongue to bring to God in confession & repentance.*

*To know your heart, listen to your speech...to change your speech, address your heart.*

In this lesson, we'll take time to specifically identify and define several sins of the tongue. These are the sinful speech that you and I must put off in your battle against sin. I must first identify the sin as defined in God's Word as a crucial step in confession and repentance. And then we'll take some time to trace one of these sins of the tongue back to the desires of the heart. What are the ruling desires of my heart that fuel sins of the tongue? I need to first identify the destructive words that proceed from my mouth and then trace them back to their sinful roots.

Consider Ephesians 4 and the language of "Putting Off...Putting On": this is the nuts and bolts of sanctification – decisions – actions.

Vs 7 "...you must no longer live as the Gentiles do" in a life of sinful thinking and sinful actions

Vs 21-24 rather, pursue the new, Spirit-filled life...or *live in a manner that's consistent with our new identity in Christ*

Vs 22 Put off (Gr. remove dirty, filthy clothes) your old self (unregenerate, former self)

Vs 23 Put on (add on) your new self

Vs 25 Put away falsehood (sin of tongue), put on truthfulness (it's replacement)

Vs 29 Put off corrupting talk, put on edifying speech

Vs 31 Put off bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice

Vs 32 Put on kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness

Let's take a closer look at many of these sinful words as defined in Scripture – it is not an exhaustive list, but quite representative. These are the words we must put off. A laundry list of sins that proceed from the heart in our speech.

As an assignment for you during this lesson, as we review each sin of the tongue, do the following:

1. Take note of the sinful speech that you are currently committing or you routinely struggle with
2. Consider the circumstances you say these things, how you say them, and against whom you say them  
Ask yourself: What are the specific desires of my heart that I am willing to sin for with this sinful speech?

*And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness*

James 3:6

### Sins of the Tongue

#### 1. Grumbling and Complaining

*Do all things without grumbling or disputing.*

Philippians 2:14

Grumbling = *a display of dissatisfaction in one's circumstances that's ultimately rooted in the unbelief of God's promises and provision*

This passage, Phil 2:14, immediately follows the command to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." The command to follow and obey and strive for Christlikeness. And the promise that God will empower our efforts as we strive in the strength of the Holy Spirit. And oh, how we need his strength in overcoming grumbling, complaining words!

Grumbling and complaining has become so commonplace in our everyday speech – we scarcely recognize it as sin. At issue is our expectation of a trouble-free life; circumstances revolve around my desires – comfort – schedule. But God has other plans to make you like Christ through hardship and trial.

Numbers 16 – God takes sin of grumbling seriously; Korah & leaders of Israel rebelled against Aaron & Moses, God’s chosen leaders – earth swallowed up. Next day, Israel grumbled against Moses & Aaron – blamed them for killing God’s people. God took this rebellion against His ordained authorities as a sin against Himself...and God sent a plague to kill 14,700 until Moses offered an atonement for their sins. As we know, it required the sacrifice of Christ Himself to present a sufficient atonement to fully satisfy the wrath of God for our sins, including our sins of complaint.

Ask yourself:       What do I want so badly that I will argue and complain to God?  
                          Am I discontent with the circumstances God has ordered for me?  
                          Am I dissatisfied with His timing?  
                          I need to confess this to the Lord, and ask God to fashion a heart that recognizes God who orders and fashions my steps according to His good and perfect plan!

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, traveling around the country roads of Ohio with my wife, Christie, and was complaining greatly about the slow car in front of me, delaying my plans to be with family on the other side of the state. My timeframe was different than the Lord’s. Is *my schedule* really all that important that I should sin and complain with my less than favorable circumstances? In the grand scheme of things, the timeliness of our plans were not really all that important. And as I thought about it, I was missing out on a fruitful time with my wife, who wasn’t bothered at all with our slow pace down the road...it was a beautiful day that the Lord had made! Convicted, I asked God to settle my heart, to agree with His timeframe, and to enjoy the day He has made. To be content with HIS plans and to make them my own. I confessed by sin, and asked for His forgiveness.

Other references for study:

Ex 15:22-25; Num 14:1-4; 16:3, 41; Ps 106:24-25; 1 Cor 10:9-11; Phil 2:14

## 2. Flattery

*A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.*  
Proverbs 29:5

Flattery = *a lie disguised as an encouragement that’s fueled from a selfish motive to manipulate*

Way back in my undergrad days I coordinated a fundraiser for my engineering college. I brought in a guy called “Mr. Suit”, who brought in racks and racks of formal wear for men – suit coats and the like. He was a true salesman to the young men who were planning to look their best for the next interview or formal event. His lines were somewhat like, “you look like a million bucks in that jacket” or “your momma won’t recognize this handsome devil” – total flattery!

Flattery is a form of lying that’s very insidious, presented as compliments -actually insincere praise. Flattery “masquerades as encouragement” (Jon Bloom) – in reality, it is manipulation to achieve selfish ends. In contrasting true encouragement with flattering words, Jon Bloom said that there is “a heaven-and-hell difference between the two.” In contrast, encouragement is a truth spoken for the good of another that springs from a loving motive. Flattery uses deceptive lies to use other people under the guise of loving intentions – it is a ruse. True love never flatters – rather, it rejoices in the truth.

*Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue*  
Proverbs 28:23

In Proverbs 28:23, rebuke is contrasted to flattery – why? A rebuke speaks the truth, even though it may hurt, with the intention of a loving concern and a good outcome for the hearer. Flattery is a lie, looking to achieve a selfish end by manipulating the hearer under the guise of encouragement

Consider also that flattery is a characteristic of the wicked, as in Psalm 5:9, *For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue.* Reminiscent of Romans 3 – an expose’ of man’s sin nature & wickedness – tongues are cited. Open grave + we bury dead out of dignity, but also to conceal stench/sight of decaying flesh (MacArthur Study Bible). Throat is open grave – tongues expose the wicked, stenchy heart that others see – includes flattery.

Questions to ask yourself:

What are reasons that you flatter? What is desire of my heart?

Perhaps you crave attention, or fast track help for favor, or just want to be perceived positively.

Flattery then uses others through deceitful words to achieve that end

Flattery seeks to ingratiate others to yourself by exaggerating their good qualities.

Consider:

We also desire to be on the receiving end of flattery – to hear flattering words about us

The devil used flattery in deceiving Eve – he’s a master of using half-truths to achieve his ends

Beware of your prideful heart that desires to be on the receiving end of flattering words.

Our sinful hearts crave admiration, attention, relevance, prestige – even if know it’s disingenuous

Sexual sin, lusting, pornography – initiated often by flattery (Prov 6:24 warns us about “the smooth tongue of the adulteress”). Also consider how I may be using flattery to accomplish a ruling desire in my heart.

Other references for study: Ps 5:9; 12:3; Prov 6:24; 7:21; 26:28; 28:23; 29:5

### 3. Gossip and Slander

*A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.*

Proverbs 16:28

Gossip = maliciously discussing details about someone else that is often false or sensationalized

“Whisperer” ~ speaks of sly, devious, evil intentions, stealthy, back-room stuff

A person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others (Merriam-Webster)

Sinful intentions fuel gossip, seeking to spread information to the harm of others or to promote self.

Slander = the spreading of false information about someone with malicious intent

= “the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation” (Merriam-Webster)

Consider: Just because something is factual about someone doesn’t give us the green light to share it

Consider: Gossip is sharing someone’s private info to another who’s not part of the problem nor part of solution.

Consider: Realizing that gossip is shared behind someone’s back, you can ask yourself if you would feel comfortable having the conversation in the presence of whom it is about. Would I be ashamed of this? Would I want someone to talk in this manner about me? (Mitchell)

Consider: We can speak truthfully about others with good motives, as Jesus did, w/o sinning - God despises the sin of gossip and slander - both are listed in “6 things God hates” (Prov 6:17, 19)

Talebearer = spreads hateful, destructive information about others; contrary to edification

Spreading tales specifically hurts or wounds others - encourages strife, divisiveness, disunity

Gossip is spokesperson for Satan - spreading his language, promoting his destructive purposes. It is the opposite of loving speech that promotes healing, edification, building up. Participation in gossip can be alluring, fun, and addicting (called "delicious morsels" – Prov 18:8). There is this sinister desire to "have the dirt" on someone, being the first to break the news. Or perhaps a gossip is our back-door means to revenge to damaging someone's character. And therefore, we must deny this sinful craving to know and spread rumors and hurtful details. In contrast, love seeks to conceal information to protect, whether it is factual or not...even to point of an offense.

*Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.*  
Proverbs 11:13

*Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends*  
Proverbs 17:9

Other references for study: Prov 6:12-14; 10:18; 11:13; 16:27-28; 17:9; 18:8; 20:19; 25:23; 26:22; Jam 4:11

#### **4. Angry Speech**

*A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.*  
Proverbs 29:22

Angry Speech = rash and hateful words that arise from pride and selfishness (Newheiser)

Proverbs 29:22 informs us that strife is the next-door neighbor to anger. Dissension, disunity, conflict and much transgression are invariably the consequences of sinful anger. And we know that sinful anger can be displayed with not only the tongue, but in sinful angry actions. Sinful anger shows itself in temper tantrums, blow-ups, outbursts of livid rage and wrath. Hateful, angry words can often escalate into physical acts of violence and physical harm.

Uncontrolled anger as a manner of life is an identifying feature of the wicked, in need of regeneration.  
Galatians 5:19-21 *The works of the flesh are evident...enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalry, dissensions, divisions, envy...I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*  
Prov 15:1

I was in a car accident (fender bender) some years ago – the fault was mine – and immediately after the collision the other driver was ready to have some words and I could see a great deal of anger on his face and angry words starting to proceed from his mouth. I quickly de-fused the situation declaring my fault (as it was) and extended my sincere apologies. The other driver immediately changed his demeanor to a more peaceful tone and we were able to talk it through. Add to that - he was a larger man than I was...and so there is much wisdom in a gentle answer (self-preservation may have had some play in all this).

Note: There's a righteous anger identified in Scripture – the only kind of anger exhibited by God. (Eph 4:26)  
Ephesians 4:26 *Be angry and do not sin;*  
a) Real sin has taken place, b) Your concern is for God's glory and kingdom, not your own  
c) Your anger is expressed righteously (Newheiser)

Other references for study: Prov 12:18; 14:17; 15:1; 15:18; 29:22; Eccl 7:9; Jam 1:19-20

## 5. Quarrels/Strife/Arguments

*As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.*  
Proverbs 26:21

Quarrels/Strife/Arguments = contentious words that fuel strife, arguments, dissension, conflict & fights

= quarrelsome words that kindle feuds and conflicts and disharmony

This is one who always throws the proverbial hand grenade that won't let a controversy die or go away. It is sinful to delight in verbal combat. Combative words are not God's words.

Consider: Much discourse in the town square today is largely argumentative and quarrelsome. Bullying and name-calling may make a viral Twitter moment – but it is not Christian.

Consider: There is great harm and hurt to others in our angry words. We can say such hurtful things in a fit of rage...brings great turmoil/harm to relationships.

Argumentative speech, stirring the pot of dissension, is not to be tolerated among God's people!

*10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.*  
Titus 3:10-11

Ministry to God's people cannot succeed through quarrelsome speech (picking a fight):

*23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*  
2 Timothy 2:23-26

*A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating.*  
Proverbs 18:6

*Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out, and quarreling and abuse will cease.*  
Proverbs 22:10

Consider: Do you always have an axe to grind?  
Is there always a fault to find in your roommate that you want to contend and bring out?  
Do you relish "stirring the pot" and getting everything to a boiling point of chaos?

*The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.*  
Proverbs 17:14

Other references for study: Prov 6:12-14; 10:12; 13:10; 17:1, 14, 19; 18:6-7; 22:10; 26:21; 30:33; Mt 5:21-22;  
2 Tim 2:24-26; Tit 3:10-11

## 6. Excessive Words (Verbosity)

*When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.*  
Proverbs 10:19

Excessive Words = speaking many more words than are necessary for the moment or circumstance  
= “the habit of talking too much while saying too little” (Swindoll, P. 92)

One commentator said it this way: *Words are like sheep; the more there are, the better the chances that some will go astray.*  
*The NIV Application Commentary - Proverbs, Paul E. Koptak*

Consider: Talk Radio, or a podcast – apologies are often demanded and necessary because of careless statements

Consider: Someone who speaks too much is often a very poor listener.  
They are likely to also be a very poor learner.  
It is nearly impossible to learn while I am talking

Why? We believe what we have to say deserves greater attention, than what others have to say.

Questions to ask yourself:

Can I let a comment go by and withstand the urge to always comment or weigh in? (politics, theology...)

Do I believe that meaningless chatter is better than no conversation at all?

Am I so uncomfortable with silence that I am compelled to always say something?

Do I pause to listen, rather than jumping in to always dominate the conversation?

Consider: Pursue becoming a good listener  
- Work at asking open-ended questions, looking for a topic that excites the other  
- Consider how to make the other person’s interests more important than your own.

*Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*  
Philippians 2:4

Other references for study: Prov 10:8; 10:19; 13:3; 17:27-28; Eccl 5:2

## 7. Hasty Speech

*Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*  
Proverbs 29:20

Hasty Speech = words spoken so quickly that they lack wisdom and discernment

Consider: Don’t say first thing that comes to mind – especially in a heated or emotional discussion  
We can rashly speak hurtful words that are unloving and damaging to the relationship.  
We can also be quick to say something before we have all the information.

*A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.*  
Proverbs 29:11

A literal translation from one commentator: *The NIV Application Commentary- Proverbs, P. 640, Paul E. Koptak*  
“A fool gives out all his breath/mind, but the wise quietly holds it back.”

In other words, the fool cannot restrain his words – they gush forth – can’t be held back. But a wise man exercises self-control; there is prudence in restraining a quick response.

Consider: Learn to specialize in listening (requires humility!)

*Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,  
Proverbs 1:5*

Give thought and consideration before you speak; often better to hold your tongue and respond later. When emotions run high, there is great wisdom in holding back.

Personally, on many occasions I have the urge to respond to an electronic communication – a flame-thrower in the battle of words – “this is perfect – it will top and destroy what he had to say”. And I have often made the mistake of returning fire hastily in a display of nasty come-backs. Yet other times when wisdom prevailed, and I have held back, or was (by God’s grace) interrupted from responding in the moment and have looked back and thanked the Lord later knowing the response would have been sinful and wrong and regretful, not building up but tearing down – and then respond later (or not at all) when I have had the opportunity to consider the situation and let cooler heads prevail.

Consider: Learn to speak with intentional words, not just to take up space with speech.  
Practice at choosing your words carefully...not just saying the first thing that comes to mind  
Discern those moments when your emotions are ahead of sound wisdom, and zip the lips!

*The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.  
Proverbs 15:28*

Other references for study: Prov 13:3; 15:28; 29:11, 20

## 8. Boasting

*Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.  
Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.  
Proverbs 27:1-2*

Boasting = Prideful, arrogant assertions about one’s life in his/her circumstances, future, and abilities

Contrasted to a trust & confidence in God’s sovereign control as one who order our steps and plans our good.

Consider: It’s hard to listen to a bragger – always espousing their own virtues, qualities, or greatness  
In contrast it is so pleasant to speak to the humble – those filled with virtue

*1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.  
2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.  
Proverbs 27:1-2*

*15 Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”  
16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.  
James 4:15-16*

The prideful/arrogant person is not teachable – God opposes the proud...looks to the humble. Rather, exercise humility attitudes and service toward one-another.

*5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,*  
1 Peter 5:5-6

Authentic, Spirit-filled love is not boastful

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant*  
1 Corinthians 13:4

References: Ps 12:3-4; 94:3-4; Prov 25:14, 27; :26:12; 27:1-2; Jam 4:13-16

## 9. Lies and Deception

*Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.*  
Proverbs 12:22

Lies = communication that is blatantly not true

*Sinful speech is the language of the devil – Satan himself is the liar of all liars – there's no truth in him!  
You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.  
He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.  
When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*  
John 8:44

Deception = communication that intends to mislead by misrepresenting or concealing information  
2 ways (Priolo)  
a) misrepresent (falsify) information  
b) withhold (conceal) important facts – from those who need or would benefit  
= a subtle form of lying...but it is lying nonetheless...the white lie (a real misnomer!) or the half-truth  
(another misnomer!)

Other references for study: Ps 120:1-4; Pr 4:24; 6:12, 17, 19; 10:18; 12:17, 19, 22; 14:5, 25; 25:18; 26:18-19, 24-26;  
30:8

Consider: Question: How may I be using lies or deception to accomplish sinful desires?  
Fear of Man – lie to make myself look good; generate or preserve a reputation;  
scared of consequences if the truth were known.  
Answer: a proper fear of God that trusts in His promises that accomplish His good purposes through  
our truthful lips

This concludes our list of nine sins of the tongue...there are more of them. Other forms of sinful speech:  
Filthy speech, Cursing, Plotting evil, Nagging, Seductive speech, Untimely speech, Careless words

Remember our assignment for you during this lesson: As we review each sin of the tongue,  
Take note of the sinful speech that you are currently committing or you routinely struggle with.  
Consider the circumstances you say these things, how you say them, and against whom you say them  
Ask yourself: What are the specific desires of my heart that I am willing to sin for with this sinful speech?  
Now let's consider how to Scripturally do battle with these sins in the power of the Spirit.

## **A 2-Dimensional Strategy for Battling My Sins of the Tongue** reference *Deception – Letting Go of Lying*, Lou Priolo

### 1. Address the Specific Sins of the Tongue

These are the sins of the moment that appear on surface that must be dealt w/ as Holy Spirit convicts.

Fight to win each battle – day-to-day effort to put off sinful words, and replace (put on) w/ godly words.

Forsaking the sin and choosing to obey. A hand-to-hand combat that must be waged (rather than merely longing for a someday heart change). In reality, this combat in the trenches will serve you well in building up your desire to change!

- A. Identify your sinful speech and how you specifically say it  
Take some time to pray and take inventory – how do I specifically sin in this way?
- B. Confess the sin to God and make things right with men (1 Jn 1:9)  
We humbly request God’s forgiveness, confessing our sin with desire to do no more
- C. Put off your sinful speech and put on its godly replacement (Eph 4)  
With God’s help, choose to obey by avoiding sinful speech, and replacing with righteous alternative  
Psalm 39:1        *I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue...*

### 2. Address the Underlying Idol(s) of the Heart

These are ruling desires of the heart that tempt me to speak sinfully – desires that fight for supremacy. A consistent, long-term commitment to refashion desires of your heart to avoid unnecessary conflict and develop a maturity to face temptations effectively. Fight to win the war – long term strategy. We are performing triage when addressing the specific sins of my tongue (point 1 of our 2-dimensional strategy) – multiple times a day! There is a point where it’s like, “I’m tired of struggling with this same sin...how do I get on top of it more consistently and experience victory?”

- A. Identify the ruling desire that motivates your sinful speech (make the connection)  
Why did I say that? What motivated that lie, or slander, or gossip, or sexual inuendo?  
What is the “sin behind the sin”?  
Psalm 139:23-24    *23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!*  
                          *24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*
- B. Confess your wayward heart to God
- C. Exchange idols of the heart with a fear and trust in God and His ways (2 Cor 5:9)  
Inform your mind with truth about God and His character and His purposes.  
And align your heart to His, trusting Him in faithful obedience.

As an example, consider Rich’s sinful speech on his recent road trip when driving behind a very slow driver (noted earlier in this lesson):

### 1. Address the Specific Sins of the Tongue

- A. Identify your sinful speech and how you specifically say it  
- grumbling and complaining, specifically voicing ill will toward other drivers
- B. Confess the sin to God and make things right with men (1 Jn 1:9)  
- Lord, these complaints are not befitting of a Christ-follower.
- C. Put off your sinful speech and put on its godly replacement (Eph 4)  
- I chose to stop whining – not going to say it!  
- Instead, I chose to be thankful, I chose patience, I chose to speak edifying things with my wife  
- In fact, God gave me many more opportunities to practice on the way home...

2. Address the Underlying Idol(s) of the Heart

A. Identify the ruling desire that motivates your sinful speech (make the connection)

Why was I complaining? What was the “sin behind my sin of grumbling”?

- someone was getting in the way of my plans (circumstances) and I was blaming them
- I had a schedule, and someone else was changing it – and I didn’t like it

B. Confess your wayward heart to God

- Lord, forgive me of my self-centeredness – forgive my dissatisfaction when things don’t go my way
- Lord, I am dissatisfied & discontented with the circumstances that you have ordained & you control
- and therefore, my grumbling has really been a complaint against You – dissatisfaction w/ You
- forgive me for making my plans more important than Yours – and help me to submit to yours

C. Exchange idols of the heart with a fear and trust in God and His ways (2 Cor 5:9)

- Lord, help me to get my eyes off myself, and to put my gaze on you – your ways, your desires
- Lord, make me a servant when I am with the family – help me to put others before myself
- Lord, you are sovereign over all things for my good – (inform heart w/ truth – study – counsel)

- other circumstances were less than ideal – I couldn’t stream Buckeye football game in the WV mountains
- but I was already addressing my self-centered heart in my whines and complaints
- and guess what – I did not grumble and sin...my heart was already right with God and His plan!

David made this connection between heart and tongue in Psalm 141, asking God to protect the outside...my tongue and my speech while also asking God to remedy inside...the inclination of his heart.

*(3) Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!  
(4b) Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds...*

Psalm 141

## Truths about My Tongue – Lesson 4:

### *Communicating with Godly Speech – Learning to Speak with A Transformed Tongue*

This is the final lesson in our mini-series on the Truths About My Tongue.

#### The Perfect Tongue

Let's consider an important truth that will appear quite obvious, yet is amazingly profound when we ponder it.

*Jesus never uttered a single, sinful sentence...not even a single sinful word – never!*

When I was growing up with 3 siblings there were many rivalries, disputes, fights, jealousies - hurtful words, angry words, sarcastic words, taunting words, put downs, and much, much more! My mom and dad should have worn black/white striped shirts – at times more like full time referees! Think: Jesus was raised with siblings – never a cross word, never angry/jealous words to get way, never cross words with parents, or gossip about the weird neighbor next door, never! And this while living with siblings & parents & neighbors that sinned with their tongues all the time!

*21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

1 Peter 2:21-23

Now think with me further – Jesus not only avoided sinful speech, but...

*Jesus always spoke with righteous words – every one of them – always!*

Jesus spoke perfectly – always righteous words, timely words, wise & edifying words. They were also words that always gave honor and glory to Father, they never failed to fully and properly promote God's purposes, they were always perfectly consistent with God's will.

Jesus had a Sinless, Perfect Tongue -

Listen to Isaiah's reaction when given a glimpse of Lord's glory, seated on His throne, high & lifted up:

*And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips,  
and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"*

Isaiah 6:5

Isaiah, seeing a glimpse of the sinless, perfect, holy, all-powerful God, is ashamed and undone in the presence of the King. And the first thing he states the summarizes his unworthiness is the sick condition of His sinful tongue.

Praise God...we as believers in Jesus Christi have a Mediator – and today we can come before His presence. One day we will be like Him...no more sin...no more sinful speech...our tongues freed from sin forever! But not just that, we will only speak purely, and righteously, and only praiseworthy words!

This is why we were created – God's purpose for us...to speak and live for Him and reflect His glory. Until that day when our sins are no more...in this unredeemed flesh...we are being progressively transformed and changed and renovated more & more into Christ's likeness – and this includes our speech! And this is what God is doing– the work He began & will finish is one that starts and finishes with our hearts.

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,  
are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*

2 Corinthians 3:18

## Key thoughts:

*Growth in Christlikeness includes a transformation of our tongues that speak excellently to both God and others*

## 5 Ways to Speak with A Transformed Tongue

### 1. **Learn to Speak with Excellence** (an overarching point in this lesson)

Nuts and Bolts of this: Replace Sinful Speech with Righteous Speech; we must always be putting off and putting on.

Ephesians 4: Putting Off...Putting On – the nuts and bolts of sanctification – decisions – actions  
:17 “...you must no longer live as the Gentiles do” in a life of sinful thinking and sinful actions  
:21-24 rather, pursue the new life...the spirit-filled life...  
- *live in a manner that’s consistent with our new identity in Christ*  
Vs 22 Put off (Gr. remove dirty, filthy clothes) your old self (unregenerate, former self)  
Vs 24 Put on (add on) your new self  
Vs 25 Put away falsehood (sin of tongue), put on truthfulness (it’s replacement)  
Vs 29 Put off corrupting talk, put on edifying speech  
Vs 31 Put off bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice  
Vs 32 Put on kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness

Let’s look at our list of Sins of the Tongue (Lesson 3) and consider some Righteous Replacements.  
You need to identify your specific struggle with sinful speech to put off and take note of the replacements to put on.

#### **Sinful Speech (Put Off!)**

##### **Grumbling & Complaining**

= *a display of dissatisfaction in one’s circumstances that’s ultimately rooted in the unbelief of God’s promises & provision*

##### **Flattery**

= *a lie disguised as an encouragement that’s fueled from a selfish motive to manipulate*

##### **Gossip & Slander**

= *maliciously discussing details about someone else that is often false or sensationalized*

##### **Angry Speech**

= *rash and hateful words that arise from pride and selfishness*

##### **Quarrels/Strife/Arguments**

= *contentious words that fuel strife, arguments, dissension, conflict and fights*

##### **Excessive Words (Verbosity)**

= *speaking many more words than are necessary for the moment or circumstance*

##### **Hasty Speech**

= *words spoken so quickly that they lack wisdom and discernment*

##### **Boasting**

= *Prideful, arrogant assertions about one’s life in his/her future, and abilities*

##### **Lies and Deception**

= *communication that’s blatantly not true; misleading someone by misrepresenting/concealing information*

#### **Righteous Replacements (Put On!)**

##### **Thanksgiving & Gratitude & Praise**

1 Th 5:18 *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

##### **Encouragement & Exhortation**

##### **Unspoken Words**

Prov 11:13 *Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.*

##### **Gentle, Calm, Patient Words**

Prov 15:1 *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

##### **Kind and Edifying Words**

Prov 16:21 *The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.*

##### **Less Words - More Listening**

Phil 2:4 *Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

##### **Timely and Thoughtful Words**

Prov 15:23 *A person finds joy in giving an apt reply— and how good is a timely word! (NIV)*

##### **Humble and Others-Focused Words**

Eph 4:1b-2 *walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love circumstances,*

##### **The truth & nothing but the truth; integrity**

Eph 4:25 *...having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor...*

THINK: In all this, I am learning to speak with excellence. This takes practice!  
Confess, put off, put on: "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue..." Psalm 39:1

*But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment  
trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*  
Hebrews 5:14

Consider: Where does God want you to practice speaking with excellence today?  
What sinful speech can you confess – even this very moment?  
What replacement words will you strive to use, with God's help, when tempted later?  
Guess what? You're going fail again...and need to confess...and need to practice. It is worth the fight. The battles you fight today will win the wars tomorrow. You can be more holy. Godly words that are so difficult to say today can come more naturally tomorrow – with practice

## **5 Ways to Speak with A Transformed Tongue**

### **2. Speak to Encourage & Exhort**

Encouragement = consoling and rousing the will of the discouraged to hopeful attitudes and actions

*And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:14

Fainthearted (*oligopsychos*) = "small souled" = discouraged, weary, despondent.  
Issue ≠ rebellion, but rather feeling of defeat and lack of ambition (MacArthur & Mack, P319)  
This discouragement can come from circumstances, trials, disappointments of life

I distinctly remember when I lost my engineering job in Columbus in 2010 and the fears and doubts that came with the circumstances. A young, Christian international student and friend at Ohio State emailed hopeful and cheerful words that was balm for a discouraged heart – I will never forget that.

Encouragement is very practical: be a friend that comes alongside the hurting – there's no self-centeredness here!  
Anyone like that back at the dorm or workplace? Cheer them, help them, come along their side.

Exhortation = earnestly appealing to others to respond properly to God's truth ([Precept Austin](#))  
This is calling others to "act consistently with God's will" (MacArthur & Mack, P319)  
Exhortation (*parakaleō*) = "to call to one's side, call for, summon" (Vines)

Exhortation is not the coach's halftime speech to get out there & knock heads – but may be needed for the game :-)  
Godly exhortation finds its basis and substance in the truths of God's Word. Romans 12:8 identifies exhortation as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul expected Timothy's ministry of the Word to not only include a proclamation of truth. It was also to include the call to obey and follow and respond as God would have you do.

*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching*  
1 Timothy 4:13

Consider: How can I participate in exhortation? Writer of Hebrews gives us direction:

*12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart,  
leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day,  
as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*  
Hebrews 3:12-13

Consider: Embrace reality: each one of us are vulnerable to being duped by sin's deceitfulness  
 Strive to make exhortation part of your personal ministry in body life of Boundless & TBC  
 Exhort others to remain faithful when there is temptation to be weak or to turn away from truth.  
 As we receive faithful teaching – exhort one another – to be doer of Word & put into practice!  
 Men – bring out the call for other men to strive for purity and put off immorality  
 Ladies – hold each other accountable to godly pursuits and not frivolous activity

### 5 Ways to Speak with A Transformed Tongue

#### 3. Speak with Compassionate Confrontation

*Authentic love is manifested by communicating truthfully with someone, even though it may hurt.*

*5 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse (many/deceitful) are the kisses of an enemy.*

Prov 27:5-6

Faithful friends demonstrate their love to others by saying necessary correction that hurts. This takes normal conversation (“speaking with”) to more intentional (“speaking into”) someone’s life

Consider: Confrontation is greatly misunderstood – yet it’s a principle means ordained by God to accomplish His purposes in us; using regular members of the body...not just pastors...to help others

Consider: How might the “faithful wounds of a friend” look? Let’s look at a familiar passage for some insights:

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Equipping work of God’s Word occurs as we use to teach, reprove, correct, train; the correcting terms:

- Teach = doctrine – *didaskalia* instructing the content of message of what God has to say Barnett
- Reprove = correcting wrong behavior or wrong belief (sinful actions or false doctrine) (MSB)
  - = most of Paul’s uses – exposing sin or fault (Segal)
  - = *elegmos* - using God's Word to point out errors in conduct or belief (Barnett)
- Correct = “restoration of something to its proper condition” (MSB)
  - The idea of showing someone in the direction of a proper behavior or thinking.
  - Epanorthosis* - using God's Word for restoring someone back on their feet after stumbling or falling; the edification and building up ministry of God’s Word (Barnett)
  - Showing someone how to get right with God
- Rebuke = “an expression of strong disapproval”; stronger word than reprove (Phil Johnson)
  - = refuting error, false teaching, sin in someone else’s life (Phil Johnson)
  - elegchō* – “to convict, confute, refute” w/ suggestion of putting convicted person to shame (Vines)
  - = “deals more w/ correcting a person’s motives by convicting person of their sin” (MSB)
  - = conveys sense of command/warning including an implied threat; doesn’t necessarily bring one to a conviction of any fault (in contrast to reprove) [PreceptAustin2Tim4\\_2](#)
  - 1 Tim 5:20 *As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all*
  - Tit 1:9 *give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it*
  - Tit 1:13 *rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,*
  - 2 Tim 4:2 *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*
  - Eph 5:11 *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them*

Consider: Have you ever been lovingly reproved, corrected, or rebuked by someone?  
 Where someone was brave enough and caring enough to tell you that you were wrong?  
 Rear view mirror: a rebuke can be the most influential and meaningful times in your life.

Are you willing to *receive* correction or a rebuke? (Teachable spirit requires humility)  
A closely related area is providing Biblical counsel....is to Speak to Others with Sound Advice

*I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness,  
filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.*  
Romans 15:14

Paul shared several commendations for the believers in Rome – one of these:

- “Able to instruct one another” (they were competent to counsel)  
Instruct = (Gr *noutheteō*; noo-thet-ay-oh) – “nouthetic counseling” or “Biblical counseling”  
= also translated as: to admonish, to warn, to exhort; literally = “to put in the mind” (Vines)  
= encouraging, advising, warning people in view of their sin behavior and the  
explaining the inevitable consequences of their choices  
= summary, it is “giving counsel with a warning involved” ([preceptaustin](#)) Cross reference: 1 Th 5:11,14

Consider: Think about how you’ve received godly counsel this year – and how you’ve benefited  
So constructive, so helpful – to be warned, to be helped, to be shown the right direction  
I have benefited countless times, altering the trajectory of my life for good

So how can I grow in this area of counseling others?

Here are suggestions for growth in counseling others Biblically

- 1) Specialize first in a personal practice of godliness  
Rom 15:14 *“you yourselves are full of goodness”*  
- Full of goodness (morally right (Vines); characterized by holy living; pursuing God-like character)  
Learn to address the sins in your own life – self-confrontation – as pre-requisite to counsel others
2. Examine yourself first before approaching someone else  
Mt 7:1-5 (take log out of own eye first and then can see the speck clearly in someone else’s eye)
- 3) Saturate your mind and heart with Scripture  
Rom 15:14 you are *“filled with all knowledge”*  
- saturated with God’s truth; committed to sound doctrine)  
Col 3:16 *16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,  
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*
- 4) Learn from others who counsel well  
- put up your radar at men’s Bible study - younger women learning from older women  
- attend some of the Biblical counseling classes
- 5) Put on love  
Rom 13:8 *Owe no one anything, except to love each other...*  
Gal 6:1-2 Restore sinner in “spirit of gentleness; bear their burden to fulfill law of Christ  
Counseling others isn’t about being a “sin-sniffer”, “the hunt” – searching for rebels & their sin habits.  
It’s all about loving your brothers & sisters in Christ...caring about sending them in right direction.  
A care for those who are fundamentally deceived in their sin, wrong thinking, etc.

#### **5 Ways to Speak with A Transformed Tongue**

#### **4. Speak Redemptive and Representative Words**

Godly speech includes not just avoiding bad words in our speech.

We are spokespeople for God – we speak on behalf of our Ruler and King.

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.  
We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*  
2 Corinthians 5:20

Ambassador = represents and speaks for a higher authority – and he does this duty from a foreign land; an officially recognized representative who speaks on the behalf of the King of one country to those of another country

Christian: Heaven is our home - during this temporary stay in this sinful world we speak for Christ

*For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom,  
lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

1 Corinthians 1:17

Christians represent the King of Heaven and bring the gospel message to those in the Kingdom of World  
It is a ministry of reconciliation – sharing the only news that can free and reconcile sinners to God!  
We are on a divine mission to live for Christ, and to speak on His behalf, with this gospel truth!

This is a fundamental reorientation of our lives – lose self, gain Christ – we’re compelled to love on others

**2 Cor 5:11a** *Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.*

**2 Cor 5:14-15** *4 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.* Never stop being captivated by truths of the gospel & your salvation – it compels us

## **5 Ways to Speak with A Transformed Tongue**

### **5. Speak with Words of Prayer, Thanksgiving and Praise**

Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!

2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

Psalms 105:1-2 1

**Prayer:** Prayer is an expression of our needs & dependence spoken directly to God - Ruler of universe!  
I’m amazed God has designed our prayers as a vehicle to accomplish His sovereign purposes.

**Thanksgiving:** As we consider God for everything He is – love, mercy, patience, kindness - we give Him thanks.

We come to church to learn more about Him, and make our story less about us – fuels true thanks

**Praise:** From a heart of thanksgiving flow words of praise for the mighty & wonderful things He has done

**Consider:** Many of you have a busy and challenging close to your semester in the coming days.

In times of stress & busyness there’s the temptation to turn inward, irritable, and whiney.

Lift up your requests in prayer to the Lord...be mindful of WHO He is, WHAT He has done, & praise Him

Ed Welch, a Biblical Counselor – Speaker – Author, commented on the attitudes of the Israelites in the desert, after God miraculously brought them out of Egypt. Facing adversity, they clamored to return.

*When do you find yourself grumbling and complaining? That is an early warning sign that you are vulnerable. You are believing lies about who God is. He is stingy. He is trying to make your life a little bit more miserable. He is taking you out of this land of plenty, out of Egypt of all places, He is being stingy with you, that He is bringing you to a place to die. He is simply not trustworthy. We need to take matters into our own hands. When you find yourself grumbling or complaining, when you find yourself angry, those are all early warning signs that you have succumbed to this kingdom of lies. “Thank you” is such a resounding expression of living in the Kingdom of light. “Thank you” is an acknowledgment of the truth of who God is and what He has done in the person of Christ. “Thank you” is an expression of humility. I have been needy, and You have given me the things that I needed. It summarizes spiritual realities for us. Ed Welch*

Let’s consider David’s prayer in Psalm 40:1-5 and see his praise and thanksgiving and then his God-honoring response:

*1 I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD. 4 Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie! 5 You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.*

As we close this series, may God’s grace be with us as He changes the desires of our hearts, and as we practice speaking Godly, righteous, compassionate, edifying words with a transformed tongue.

## Resource List:

### Resources for Lesson 1:

*War of Words*, Ch. 1, 2, Paul David Tripp

*Taming the Terrible Tongue*, Steven J. Cole (sermon transcript)

*Taming the Tongue, Part 1*, John MacArthur (sermon transcript)

*Taming the Tongue, Part 2*, John MacArthur (sermon transcript)

*Taming the Wayward Tongue of Man*, Jerry Wragg (audio sermon)

*Speech and the Christian Life – Part 1*, Heath Lambert (audio sermon)

ESV Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Blue Letter Bible

Precept Austin commentaries on James: <https://www.preceptaustin.org/james-3-commentary>

### Resources for Lesson 2:

*War of Words*, Paul David Tripp

*The Heart of Change* – Faith Biblical Counseling Ministries workbook

*Heart Issues and Biblical Counseling* – FBC Training Manual, Lesson 17

*Gospel Treason – Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols*, Brad Bigney (2021 Truth & Light Conference at TBC)

*How to Swear Less – 5 Methods You Can Try*

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/567340/how-to-swear-less-5-methods-you-can-try>

Precept Austin commentaries on James: <https://www.preceptaustin.org/james-4-commentary>

### Resources for Lesson 3:

*War of Words*, Chapters 4, 5 & 6, 8, 11 – Paul David Tripp

*The Heart of Change* – Faith Biblical Counseling workbook

*Overcoming Abusive Speech* – Jim Newheiser – document

*Heart Issues and Biblical Counseling* – FBC Training Manual, Lesson 17

*Killing Sin Habits – Conquering Sin with Radical Faith* - Stuart Scott and Zondra Scott

*Deception – Letting Go of Lying* – Lou Priolo

*Living the Proverbs* – Charles R. Swindoll

*Lay Aside the Weight of Flattery* – Bloom

*Sins of Speech!* Article by Richard Hollerman, True Discipleship

*What is Gossip?* Article by Matt Mitchell, Desiring God – good definitions, good tie to heart

*The NIV Application Commentary- Proverbs*, Paul E. Koptak

Precept Austin commentaries

### Resources for Lesson 4:

*Overcoming Abusive Speech* (Part III), Jim Newheiser

*Living the Proverbs*, Pp 94-104, Chuck Swindoll

*Do You Know How to Rebuke?* Marshall Segal, Desiring God

*Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort* Phil Johnson, Pyromaniacs

*War of Words*, Ch 5, 7, 12, Paul David Tripp

*David Facing Consequences*, John Barnett, Discover the Book Ministries

*Biblical Counseling*, John MacArthur and Wayne Mack

*The Psalmist's Priority of Thanksgiving*, Pastor Larry Brodie, Grace & Granite notes

*Lies: Believing Them and Telling Them*, Ed Welch, IBCD audio sermon, <https://ibcd.org/presenter/ed-welch/>