



Faith on Display in Your Conversations

WHEN HAVE YOUR WORDS GOTTEN YOU IN TROUBLE?

The POINT >

When you rely on God, your words reflect His character.

> JAMES 3:1-5a,9-10,13-18

¹Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment. ²For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is mature, able also to control the whole body. ³Now if we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we direct their whole bodies. ⁴And consider ships: Though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So too, though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things.

.....

⁹With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in God's likeness.

¹⁰ Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way.

.....

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? By his good conduct he should show that his works are done in the gentleness that comes from wisdom.

¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and deny the truth. ¹⁵Such wisdom does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

Embarrassment holds a purpose. It's the emotional equivalent to touching a hot stove—we learn not to make the same social mistakes again.²



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit inspired and guided people to write the Bible and used the personalities and voices of men to communicate the very words of God.

It is estimated that people spend fifty-two minutes a day talking about someone who is not present. Of those conversations:

- Ten percent are positive or flattering
- Seventy-five percent are neutral
- Fifteen percent are negative.¹

Recently, a friend had a guy ask her out on a date over text. She screen-captured the conversation and sent it to her best friend with the caption, “Oh no! This is a nightmare! He doesn’t get it!”

Except she hadn’t sent it to her best friend. She’d accidentally responded to the guy who’d asked her out. She was embarrassed. He was humiliated. And their friendship was impacted in a big way because of the words she’d chosen. Gossip means specifically to reveal secrets or to spread scandalous information. It’s not wrong to talk about people, as long as we’re lifting them up to others. However, when we say things that are unflattering or that tear them down, we’re acting as gossips and our words have serious consequences.

Most of the time people do not hear what is being said about them. But what if they did? Our words matter.

JAMES 3:1-5a

1 When has a sensitive situation forced you to choose your words carefully?

2 What are some of the consequences of an uncontrolled tongue?



JAMES 3:9-10

3 Why is inconsistency in the ways we use our words such a big deal?

4 What effect has technology (social media/texting) had on the way we use our words?

5 How do our words give others a glimpse into our souls?

JAMES 3:13-18

6 Why is gentleness so important in our daily lives?

7 How does heavenly wisdom differ from earthly wisdom?

8 How can we evaluate whether or not our words reflect God's character?

*We are called to be wise, and wise people speak in ways that bless others, pointing them to the goodness of God.
#BSFLFaithLivedOut*



LIVE IT OUT



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit inspired and guided people to write the Bible and used the personalities and voices of men to communicate the very words of God.

Through Scripture, God spoke to His people, revealing Himself and the ways He'd have us live. The Holy Spirit inspired real-life people to write down God's very words. Though Scripture has been completed, the Holy Spirit still works in the hearts and minds of God's people to communicate His truths to others. Our words certainly don't have the same authority as Scripture. Still, they matter a lot!

> CHRIST

9 Memorize Philippians 4:8 so that you can recall it when you are tempted to gossip or make sarcastic remarks. Begin by writing it below:

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

> COMMUNITY

The church is to be known by the unity that exists among its members. There are few things that damage unity more than gossip. Make it a point never to speak negatively about others in your church (or anyone for that matter). Instead, choose to speak well of others.

10 This week, share with three friends something specific you really appreciate about them.



> CULTURE

You might have heard the quote, “Preach the gospel at all times, and, if necessary, use words.” This is a nice sentiment—our lives are to be living pictures of the gospel. However, we must realize that words are necessary. Understand these things:

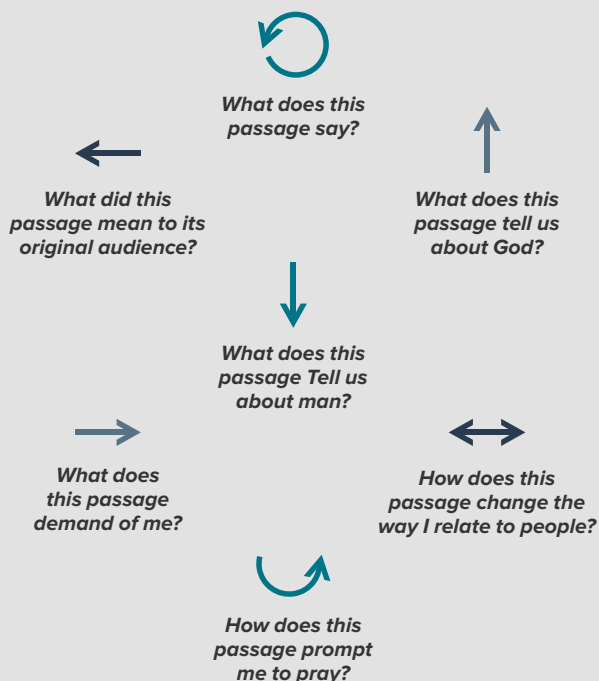
- When Christians use words that tear down, we will turn people away from Jesus.
- When we speak positively and display unity within the church, people are drawn to Jesus.

11 This week, choose to display unity to your non-believing friends. Choose to share the gospel, not only through your life, but through your words.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One EPHESIANS 4:25

When God established His covenant relationship with His people, He gave them the Ten Commandments to let them know how to live in ways that reflect Him. The ninth commandment teaches us not to lie. Many times, people see the commandments as a list of rules that ruin all our fun. However, it's quite the opposite. Not only do the commandments teach us how to live in ways that are healthy and beneficial for us—after all, lying to people causes conflict and ruins relationships—but they also teach us how to represent our heavenly Father well. God is faithful and true. He never breaks His promises. So when we lie, not only do we fail to reflect God, we offend Him. Further, we do real harm to the people in our lives. Let's make sure we always tell the truth.

➤ **Why are we commanded not to lie?**

➤ **How does lying hurt other people?**

Day Two

EPHESIANS 4:26-27



In James 1:20, we read about human anger not being equal to God's righteous anger. How, then, can Paul say to the church, "be angry"? Let's start with this. Jesus became angry (see Mark 3:5; 11:15-18; Matt. 21:12-13; John 2:13-22). And Jesus was sinless; therefore, not all anger is sin. But some of it certainly can be. This was Paul's point. Selfish anger is rooted in our weakness and sin, and it never accomplishes God's purposes. Righteous anger, which is the kind of anger Jesus felt and expressed, is related to a concern over God's glory and purposes. And even when we are angry for righteous reasons, we must resolve it quickly, because when we allow any kind of anger to fester, it can become harmful.

➤ **What's the difference between selfish anger and righteous anger?**

➤ **Why is it so important to resolve anger quickly?**

Day Three

EPHESIANS 4:28

As a reminder, the Ten Commandments teach us how to live healthy lives that reflect God, and they address not only lying, but also stealing. God is generous, and if we are to reflect Him rightly, we must be generous as well. This might seem obvious, but stealing is the exact opposite of generosity. Stealing says, "I'll take what you have for myself." Generosity says, "I'll give what I have to you." Thieves who steal harm the people who become their victims. However, we are called to bless people, and we are only in the position to do this when we devote ourselves to hard work and productivity. Through our efforts the Lord blesses not only us, but also the people we are generous to.

➤ **Why is stealing such a big deal?**

➤ **How does generosity (and work) reflect the goodness of God?**

Day Four

EPHESIANS 4:28-30

Lying is one form of foul language, and we all know that's wrong. However, there are other forms of language that shouldn't characterize followers of Jesus. "Foul" refers specifically to something that is rotten and rancid. This applies to food that's been in the fridge about three weeks too long. It also applies to the words that we simply shouldn't say. In our culture, many people freely use curse words, talk about profane and obscene ideas, and use language that doesn't point people to Jesus, but instead leads them away from God's blessings. We must be careful never to buy into these ways of speaking. Instead, we are called to speak in ways that build others up, particularly in their faith, and which would lead them into God's blessings.

➤ **What kind of "foul" language do you hear at school, in your neighborhood, or among your friends?**

➤ **How would you describe language that builds up others?**

Day Five

EPHESIANS 4:31-32



Our words are important, because communication is foundational to relationships, and, perhaps more importantly, our words reflect our hearts. When we are bitter and angry, it will overflow as harsh words that do real damage. However, when we are compassionate, sympathizing with others' struggles, our words will strengthen our relationships. Paul concluded this section with the encouragement to forgive, even when people hurt us in terrible ways. Forgiveness doesn't mean ignoring offenses. Instead, it refers to working through offenses in a way that we can experience reconciliation with those who have offended us. Forgiveness isn't easy. However, Jesus forgave us of the worst offenses imaginable. And He will help us to forgive others as well.

➤ **How are words a reflection of our hearts?**

➤ **Why is it necessary for us to be willing to forgive people who offend us?**