

Sunday, December 27, 2009—The Weight of Our Words—Conquering Fear With Love: A Commitment to Sound Speech

Introduction

- In these days following Christmas there is a teachable moment about what is really important in life. Share thoughts from Pastor Jordan's Blog.
- Over the past three months we have been discussing issues related to the tongue and sound speech. Today as we close down 2009 we are going to wrap this study up.
- In order to do so I would like to look back on where we have been and then offer some final thoughts.
- Throughout this study we have looked at the following topics:
 - Principle 1: Controlled Speech Is a Measure of Maturity—James 3:2
 - Principle 2: The Tongue is Small but Significant—James 3:3-5
 - Principle 3: Our Words Are Potentially Combustible—James 3:6
 - Principle 4: The Tongue is Like a Wild and Deadly Beast—James 3:7-8
 - Principle 5: The Tongue Tends to Promote a Double Standard—James 3:9-12
 - In *To Tell the Truth*, we looked at the differences between Beguilement, Deceit, Lying and False Witness
 - In *Maliciously Speaking*, we touched on the catastrophic cousins of Gossip and Slander
 - In *Cross Words*, we studied the problems of Murmuring and Contentious Words
 - In *Out of the Abundance of the Heart*, we addressed the issues of taking God's name in vain, sensuous speech, as well as how what we say reflects the condition of our inner man. In addition we looked at the details of the Proud Heart, Angry Heart, and the Fearful Heart
 - In *Speaking Out for Number One*, we confronted Boasting, Flattery, and Exaggeration and how they were related to Pride
 - In *Defusing Anger*, we studied how anger in itself is not sin. In addition, we offered three Biblical principals regarding Anger: 1) Be Slow to Wrath, 2) Be Angry and Sin Not, 3) Deal With Anger Before Sundown. Lastly, we offered practical tips for how to redirect our focus and channel our anger in positive ways.

Apples of Gold

- God's Word highlights many rewards for those who use their speech to bless others.
- The productive tongue is characterized as
 - Proverbs 10:19-21--wise, like choice silver, a banquet for many,
 - Proverbs 12:22--the Lord's delight

- Proverbs 13:3 a guardian of the soul,
 - Proverbs 15:1--a vehicle to turn away wrath
 - Proverbs 15:4--a tree of life
 - Proverbs 17:27--full of knowledge and a reflection of faithfulness.
- In a world that is total rebellion to God's standards regarding pure speech how do we as believers maintain our commitment speaking only that which is good to the use of edifying?
 - The following three commitments will help safe guard our speech and help us become better examples for others:
 - *Commit to developing your own spiritual maturity.*
 - Fortify your mind and your inner man by studying God's word daily (Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16).
 - Remain instant in prayer. If you are struggling with your speech always remember that you can go to God at any time. Prayer unlocks the power of the God's written word in your life (Philippians 4:6-7, I Thessalonians 2:13).
 - Speak less and listen more (Psalms 141:3).
 - *Commit to speaking only good things about other people.* After hearing something scandalous about someone else, our natural response is to perpetuate the news in the form of slander, gossip, murmuring, or beguilement. Therefore, we must be committed to saying only good things about others.
 - Remember that we are all members of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-26, Galatians 5:15).
 - If it's not edifying or doesn't minister grace don't say it (Ephesians 4:29)
 - Remember that the way we speak teaches the unsaved about who we are (II Corinthians 3:2, I Corinthians 7:16).
 - *Commit to responding properly whenever you encounter improper speech patterns.* Our third commitment should be to respond to negative input without making the situation worse. How do we answer those whose speech is not up to God's standards?
 - Do not communicate approval of what is being said or encourage additional statements (I Thessalonians 5:15, 22, I Timothy 5:22).
 - Pray for wisdom while you are listening.

- Respond within the context of your own convictions. Keep your focus on God’s perspective in the matter.
 - Be proactive in guarding your heart and mind from hearing gossip, slander, or false reports. Listen for signal words or phrases, “Did you hear” “I probably shouldn’t be telling you this”
 - Pray about what you do hear (Philippians 4:8), try not to let bad reports prejudice your opinion of others.
- Proverbs 25:11—words fitly spoken are like apples of God in settings of silver, they are a tree of life to those who hear (Proverbs 15:4).

The Fear Factor

- We never outgrow our vulnerability to fear. It continues to paralyze our spirits so that we are like kids hiding under the covers—unable to do what we know we should. Fear saps our spiritual vitality and diminished our willingness to speak words of courage and love. We become afraid to tell others about Christ.
- Fear leaves us vulnerable to Satan’s attacks. If a young woman is afraid of losing her boyfriend, she may do things she knows are opposed to God’s will and vice versa. Fear of losing prestige, money, power, status, and friends has caused some to compromise Biblical convictions and a righteous standing before God.
- Many times our fear is expressed in our speech. Emotionally, fear is self-centered. It exists because I want to protect and preserve myself. At times fear can be constructive. On the other hand, when others interfere with our plans and threaten the fulfillment of our desires we may verbally intimidate or abuse them in an attempt to remove them as obstacles.
- II Timothy 1:7—fear does not come from God it is a product of our old nature desire for self preservation. Notice that one of the things that God has given us is the power of love.
- See charts in PowerPoint

Conclusion

- When it comes to our speech as we enter into a new year we need to:
 - Affirm commitment to righteousness at all costs.
 - Give testimony to God’s sufficiency.
 - Express confidence and loyalty to God regardless of the circumstance.
 - Express truth in the face of danger.
 - Forgive those who hurt and misuse us.

- Express gratefulness to God and those who provide support as we face difficult times.
- JUST GRACE IT!!!!