

Sunday, October 11, 2009—The Weight of Our Words: Measuring the Impact of What We Say—
Introduction

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- Being a Pastor people are always giving me books to look at. Earlier this year Carol Burley handed me a copy of a book entitled *The Weight of Your Words: Measuring the Impact of What You Say* by Joseph M. Stowell.
- At the time I had already begun preparing for the study on *Praying the Powerful Prayers of Paul*.
- It was only yesterday afternoon when I finally made the decision to go with the current study.
- Communication is the process of expressing how we feel and what we think. Most of our communication is nonverbal as others watch our facial expressions and body language to get an impression of our thoughts and feelings.
- However, it's usually verbal communication that causes the most problem for us. When used appropriately, our words have the power to heal, encourage, help, and teach. On the other hand words can confuse, embarrass, and hurt.
- Ephesians 4:29-31—Paul instructs us the no corrupt communication should come from the mouth of a believer.
- Corrupt--rotten, putrefied, **2)** corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out, **3)** of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless
- Edifying—building up, the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness
- Evil Speaking--slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name, **2)** impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty
- In a recent poll, adults said they had gotten over most of the physical pains of childhood. But many had never fully recovered from the hurtful words, names, and labels that had been placed on them. Physical wounds heal, as is evidenced from the scars we carry. But verbal wounds frequently refuse to close, oozing pain and keeping us tender and vulnerable.
- Job 19:2
- Matthew 12:36
- Idol words come from the following sources:

- Stress of everyday life, causes of the say things we don't mean
 - Exposure to negative speech patterns: angry boss, parent, crude language in TV, Music, and movies
 - Sarcastic Conversation and Idle chatter.
- The problem is that such verbal habits are highly contagious. Our tongues often recycle the input and to our chagrin, the destructive words are out of our mouths before we know it.
 - Our tongue affects our relationship with those we treasure the most as well as our relationship with ourselves.
 - As we will see throughout this series of studies that taming of our tongues is not so much an exercise in physical discipline but spiritual maturity.
 - Therefore, we need to begin by confronting the truth about what God says resided in our tongues.

Principle 1: Controlled Speech Is a Measure of Maturity

- James 3:2
- Offend--means to cause one to stumble or fall, to stumble i.e. to err, make a mistake, to sin, to fall into misery, become wretched
- Feet that stumble can bring you whole body crashing to the ground, and a tongue that offends is no less a threat. Therefore, an offending tongue reflects spiritual immaturity.
- Perfect—literally means complete or mature.
- The implication is clear; we are never spiritually mature until we no longer trip people up with our words.
- Proverbs 10:32
- Matthew 12:34
- Luke 6:45—how we talk and what comes out of our mouths is a reflection upon the condition of heart and our inner man.
- That is why controlled speech is a measure of maturity.

Principle 2: The Tongue is Small but Significant

- James 3:3-5
- Small words have started wars, resulting in thousands of lives lost. How many marriage and relationships that once set sail on a joyous adventure had been steered onto the rocks by a faulty rudder?
- We tend to think that small things are insignificant. How can a few words do serious damage? But ignoring the problem is like ignoring termites nesting in your house.

Principle 3: Our Words Are Potentially Combustible

- James 3:6
- We tend to tolerate a bit of fire in our speech, thinking it can do no harm. But fire spread quickly—often before you realize it. After a raging fire has done its damage it doesn't matter whether or not it was intentional.
- Iniquity—injustice, uprightness
- Setteth on fire—to ignite, to burn up, to operate destructively, that of which the destructive influences are kindled.
- Course—is defined as a wheel
- Matthew 15:11-20
- Just as Mrs. O'Leary's cow burned down the city of Chicago in 1871 so our mouths contain the same destructive capacity.
- The seriousness of the tongue's destructive potential is revealed in the truth that "it is set on fire of hell." It is a world of iniquity, literally an entire network of sin. We have an organized crime syndicate right in our mouths. Our tongues have the capacity to corrupt our entire beings. Nothing is exempt from the damage our tongues can cause.

Principle 4: The Tongue is Like a Wild and Deadly Beast

- James 3:7-8
- What type of animal has mankind not sought to tame?

- Yet we have not been able to tame our tongues. If we don't bring our speech habits under the Spirit's control, our tongues will be "full of deadly poison."
- Psalm 140:3
- Romans 3:13-14

Principle 5: The Tongue Tends to Promote a Double Standard

- James 3:9-12
- Someone once said that most tongues are tied in the middle, wagging at both ends.
- It amazing how we can verbally poison other people all the way to church, but as soon as we pull into the parking lot we begin to speak out of the pious side of our mouths.
- II Corinthians 5:17
- Ephesians 5—this type of communication is to be put off and out of the believer's life.

Conclusion

- In these five principals James categorizes the dark and shifty potential of the tongue. The first step toward victory is to permit these truths to penetrate our minds and hearts.
- A transformed tongue must be a top priority for those committed to spiritual growth.
- A members of the church the Body of Christ we ought not be insensitive to the problems of destructive speech.
- We often excuse one another with a number of rationalizations.
 - "Well, it's the truth, isn't it?"
 - "If they didn't want people to talk, they never should have done it."
 - "Let me share this with you so we can pray more intelligently."
 - "I heard this from a reliable source, or I wouldn't be repeating it."
- Until we get serious about bringing our tongues under control of the Holy Spirit, our churches, schools, homes, families, and friendships will continue to be victimized.