



BRANCHES

Use this curriculum to help you further engage with the sermon, the scriptures, and each other. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring things up to encourage and guide you so that you are always growing in your faith. If the Spirit leads you away from these questions and into conversation and prayer that encourages and points you to Jesus, go for it.

scripture

Read the following scriptures together: James 3:1-6 and Proverbs 12:18.

overview

The purpose of this series on Generosity is to remind us that we serve a generous God and therefore as believers, we ought to be set apart as people who are the most generous, kind, open-hearted people on earth in response to the grace we have received. This week, our focus is on the generosity of our words. Our words have the power to give and to take away, to burn up relationships and cause a lot of damage in one split second. Reckless words can pierce like swords – words that we might throw out as a “joke” to be funny, but they end up hurting someone else and there is nothing funny about it. A sad part of our humanness is that reckless, negative words stick in our minds more than any positive words spoken to us.

question 1

Recall the last few weeks – can you recall any positive words that someone spoke to you? Do you find that you also remember more negative things said than positive?

discussion

Read Matthew 12:34-37. Jesus clearly tells us that our words bubble up from our heart, that what is going on inside of us comes out of our mouth. Much like how a blood panel can read our internal health, our words read the health of our souls. Read James 3:9-12. Here we see the reality that our flesh is often at war with the Spirit who dwells in us, a contradiction in our hearts. We can speak truth to people in situations where it is needed but truth without kindness and grace will come out harsh and damaging. The words we speak to ourselves can also be critical, negative, and damaging. Be sure to give yourself grace and receive God’s mercies which are new every single day (Lamentations 3:22-23).

question 2

Have any of you experienced someone who corrected you with grace and kindness? Share how they did that and how it affected your relationship with them.

The words of Jesus bring life to all who listen (John 6:63). What we take in daily will influence what comes out of us so it’s crucial in our discipleship to be aware of and take control over what we are reading, who we listening to, and what we are watching. When we allow the angry, critical, negative voices to influence us, they will affect our hearts and our words.

Read Philippians 4:8 in The Message version. It isn’t enough to just read the Scriptures; we need to take them with us and think about them throughout the day so that these words stick in our heart and change the way we think, speak, and act. The words of the world today are toxic and since we are to be set apart from the world, we get the opportunity to bring positive, grace-filled words to everyone we encounter – especially those closest to us. Encouraging words are contagious.

question 3

What are some changes you can make in your own life to reduce the negative outside influences? Ask someone in your group to check in on you and encourage you to stick to your plan.

final thoughts

This week, be purposeful in how you speak to people in the marketplace and in your own home and office. Speak words of encouragement and words that build others up. Pay attention to how it ends up affecting your own joy. If Scripture memorization is hard for you (it is for many of us), consider writing verses down on your phone or a note card and be purposeful to look at them throughout the day until you remember them. What you take in will come out.