

Week Eleven: "Pure Speech"

Day One: "Unwholesome Talk"

Read: Ephesians 4:29

Reflect: What have you said recently that you wish you could take back?

Dig: The word "unwholesome" is used here. What adjective is used in Colossians 3:8 to describe "bad" speech?

According to Mark 7:17-23, if the tongue uses unwholesome speech, where do these unhealthy words come from?

Is this a biblical thought: "whatever is in the heart eventually comes out of your tongue." Why or why not?

Look up and read James 3:3-8. List the phrases that are used to describe the tongue:

Apply: What off-color jokes, profanity, dirty stories, vulgarity or other ways of careless speaking which are careless, do you need to make special effort to avoid?

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Day Two: "Building Others Up"

Read: Ephesians 4:29

Reflect: How much of your conversation would you have to cut out if you could only say things which encourage others?

Dig: The word "but" is a contrast word. What is it contrasting?

What does the little word "only" communicate?

What further wisdom do we receive from these Proverbs regarding building others up?

Proverbs 27:2

Proverbs 27:6

Proverbs 27:17

Apply: Make a plan to take a moment with someone today to use your tongue (or pen or computer keyboard) to build someone up with encouragement.

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Day Three: "According to Their Needs"

Read: Ephesians 4:29

Reflect: Call to mind a time when you were more concerned with others' needs than your own. What were the circumstances?

How did this awareness of others affect the way you spoke?

Dig: What does 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 have to say about the use of our tongues and thinking of others?

How does Philippians 2:3-4 explain how we should think of others?

According to Luke 6:31, what is a simple way to figure out what people's needs are?

Apply: Everyone has a need to be noticed, appreciated and simply thanked. Who can you thank today? Make a plan right now to express your appreciation.

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Day Four: "Benefit Those Who Listen"

Read: Ephesians 4:29

Reflect: How would you describe a gracious person? What other adjectives might you use?

How would a gracious person use their tongue?

Dig: The phrase "that it may benefit those who listen" could also be translated, "that it may give grace to those who hear." How is this thought of being gracious connected to how truth is to be told, according to Ephesians 4:15?

How is the tongue described in Isaiah 50:4?

According to this text (Isaiah 50:4), who benefits from this kind of tongue?

... and when do we receive instruction?

What does Colossians 4:6 tell us about gracious speech?

Since salt is a preservative, how should our talk change our friendships and conversations?

Apply: Write out a prayer based on Isaiah 50:4, asking God to teach you and instruct your tongue.

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Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 4:29 "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

-- **reading:** you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

-- **meditation**: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.

-- **prayer**: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.