

JAMES

A Faith That Works

Study 10

Speech and Spirituality Pt 2

James 3:6-12

1) Comprehension question. Based on James 3:6-12 and the video lecture, God gives us lessons regarding our speech and what we need to be watchful about. Fill in the blanks.

#	Summary	Lessons	Supporting verses
1	<i>Judgment</i>	<i>Sins of speech will be judged and particularly severely in teachers</i>	v. 1
2	<i>Universal</i>	<i>Sins of speech are a universal problem</i>	v. 2
3	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Speech has an outsized impact in our lives</i>	v. 3-5
4	Danger	Speech has the danger of great evil	v. 6
5	Out of control	Sins of speech are beyond self control	v. 7-8
6	Transformation	Speech can only be transformed by a change in our hearts	v. 9-12

Note: If any difficulties are faced answering Q1, return to this question after attempting the rest of the questions below.

A. Speech has the danger of great evil

James 3:5-6

“Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.”

2) a) Discussion question. Gossip is the “revealing of personal/sensational facts about others or rumours or reports of an intimate nature”. Consider Proverbs 20:19 as below. Does gossip (or “tales”) about someone have to be true or false to cause damage?

Proverbs 26:22

“The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.”

b) Objective question. Based on the video lecture, which of the following are the results of gossip? Select all that apply.

- A. Creates bitterness towards the one slandered
- B. Edifies the slanderer
- C. Makes judges and juries out of others
- D. Takes our minds off the more important spiritual matters
- E. Makes us righteous
- F. Breeds self-righteousness
- G. Improves dependence on God
- H. Destroys relationships
- I. Does not cure the problem but spreads its virus

c) Discussion question. Based on Psalm 12:3 and Proverbs 27:6 below, is flattery better/worse/equally bad to the sin of gossip?

- A. Better than gossip
- B. Worse than gossip
- C. Equally bad as gossip

Psalm 12:3

“May the Lord cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaks proud things,”

Proverbs 27:6

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

B. Sins of speech are beyond self control

James 3:7-8

“For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

3) Reflection question. Has there been a moment that you unintentionally said something that has caused damage to other(s)? Share with one another.

C. Speech can only be transformed by a change in our hearts

James 3:9-12

“With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.”

4) Reflection question. Matthew 12:34 says that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”. This means that our tongues reveal our hearts. Share something you have said recently that revealed what is in your heart.

5) Objective question. Based on the video lecture's Sonship Course, what constitutes good speech? Select all that apply.

- A. Not complain or grumble about one another
- B. Not gossip or repeat a matter
- C. Not boast about anything at all or yourself
- D. Not run any person down
- E. Not defend yourself if you are attacked
- F. Affirm others at all times

6) Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what are the practical applications about speech? Fill in the blanks.

#	Summary	Practical Applications	Supporting passage(s)
1	Gospel	Saturate our minds with the Gospel of grace	Phil. 4:8-9
2	Prudence	Speak less	James 1:19 Proverbs 10:19-21
3	Graciousness	Speak graciously	Colossians 4:6 Proverbs 10:20-21 Ephesians 4:15 Titus 3:1-2
4	Edification	Speak to build up	Ephesians 4:29-32 1 Cor. 14:19 1 Cor. 13:1
5	God's Spirit	Speech reflects His Spirit	Ephesians 5:18-20

Takeaway

1. Sins of speech will be judged and particularly severely in teachers (v. 1)
2. Sins of speech are a universal problem (v. 2)
3. Speech has an outsized impact in our lives (v. 3-5)
4. Speech has the danger of great evil (v.6)
5. Sins of speech are beyond self control (v. 7-8)

6. Speech can only be transformed by a change in our hearts (v. 9-12)

Case Study

Case 1 – Repentance in Speech

Fiery Tang had a twin sister, Gracious Tang. Both of them grew up together and spoke the same way. They would speak their mind without giving it much thought and in the process hurt other people with their destructive words.

However, Gracious attended Gamma 21 and learned the dangers of speech and how such a small part of the body can bring about great impact, for better or worse.

She tried to read books about speech but could never seem to improve. Most of the books on speech were techniques that didn't bring about lasting change.

Gracious approaches another Christian and requests for help. It was then that she realised, that she couldn't overcome the sins of speech in her own strength and that speech can only be transformed by a change in her heart.

1) Discussion question. The transformation by a change in heart can only happen to a saved Christian. In order for this transformation to be real in her life, what should Gracious do?

Saturate her mind with the Gospel of grace (Phil. 4:8-9). Thinking upon these things will fill our minds with what should be said, instead of the things we naturally say. Remember, it is out of the abundance of the heart, that the mouth speaks.

By meditating on the word of God, the Holy Spirit will transform us by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

2) Discussion question. One of the things that Gracious could do is to speak less (James 1:19). How does speaking less help her to reduce the sins of speech?

James 1:19 says that we should be “slow to speak”. When we speak with haste, there is not much thought given as to whether our words are appropriate. This requires self-control, which is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5).

3) a) Discussion question. Read Colossians 4:6, Proverbs 10:20-21, Ephesians 4:15, and Titus 3:1-2. What are the marks of speaking graciously?

- Knowing how to answer each person
- The words are nourishing
- Truth is spoken in love
- Evil is not spoken of anyone
- Avoiding quarrels
- Gentle
- Courteous

Essentially, speaking “graciously” refers to how we speak. The tone, the choice of words, and the intent of our speech.

b) Reflection question. What are the ways we lack grace in our speech? Share with one another.

4) a) Discussion question. Gracious was also told that both her sister and her words are destructive. Instead, it should be edifying and building other people up. What does it mean to build others up?

In Ephesians 4:29-32, our speech should be edifying or building others up. This means that the real aim/goal/purpose of what we say should be for the betterment/nourishment of others.

Essentially, our speech should help and guide others to be more Christlike (Romans 8:29).

b) Reflection question. Give an example of one speech that was destructive and one speech that was edifying that you have said to someone recently. Share with one another.