

Lost in TRANSLATION

February 4th, 2018

Leader Tip: *In the course of this lesson, your group will learn the importance of controlling our words in our daily walk. Words have the power to destroy and build up, and how we choose to respond to different situations directly impacts the outcome. We want our groups to identify how often they choose to affirm others in their words, or tear down. Also, we want them to begin to practice changing their natural habits of negativity with affirmation and encouragement of one another.*

THE WIN

Group Members will begin to identify areas in their life that their words create a negative, and destructive, environment. Then, groups will begin to see the value of creating a habit of encouraging one another.

1-2
minutes

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In the sermon this week, we learned our words have a powerful effect in shaping the people, and environments, around us. How we choose to use our words can either lead to the destruction of relationships, or the growth of others. However, when we choose to speak life through words of encouragement, we are cultivating new meaningful relationships with one another.

- Have you ever been negatively impacted by the words of another?
- In what ways can words speak life into a situation?

3-5
minutes

WARM UP

Leader Tip: *In the following activity, it will be helpful for group members to start creating a habit of speaking life into one another. What better way than in your group! This will be a great activity to grow your groups dynamic and start to cultivate deeper bonds toward one another. Have each member write their name down and drop them in a hat, or bowl. Then draw one name. The person picked will sit in the middle of the group while every other member of the group will affirm them in one way.*

Ask:

- What is one thing that you value and admire about the person picked?

30-35
minutes

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

Say This: The goal of this week is to begin identifying areas in our lives, in which, we tend to react in a destructive manner with our words. Once we do this, we can start creating a habit of encouraging one another instead of responding in a destructive manner.

Read: Ephesians 4:24-5:3

Ask This:

- According to the passage, why should we watch the things we say and do?
- Why does the passage say to not let any unwholesome speak come from your mouth?
- Do you see any form of speech mentioned that you frequently use instead of affirmation?
- Why do we tend to respond to negative moments in our lives in these ways?

Say: Many times, we do not see anything wrong with the way we choose to use our words. The common phrase is “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”. Unfortunately, this is so far from the truth. Research has shown that when someone simply looks at a negative word on a screen it can drastically impact our response time and anxiety levels. This was shown to be able to lead to an increase in failure and problems.

Read: James 1:19-21

Leader Tip: We are going to display cases in which the normal response to the situation is negative. The point of this exercise is to help your group identify areas in which they respond negatively, and begin a process of evaluating a way in which we can have grace-filled lips.

- You are driving down the road and a driver, pulling out from their driveway, fails to notice you and backs into your car. The driver gets out, clearly frustrated because they are going to be late to an important meeting, and is ready to push the blame to you for not seeing them backing out.
- Or, you are working on a group project at work, that’s success or failure, will affect the overall evaluation of each member. As you get to the week the project is due, you go and ask a group member how they are doing on the project. Turns out, they have very little done and what they have is not their best work. How they perform will directly affect the review of everyone on the group.

Ask This:

- How would you normally respond in this situation? Why might we want to respond differently?
- Why does anger not produce the righteousness of God? How does that apply to these situations?

Say: Many of us have different way to respond, but most of the time we lash out and fight for our need to be right, or for the situation to be fair. Research, by *Harvard Research*, shows that both criticism and encouragement have their place in life. However, the ratio of criticism to encouragement people normally give is very different from the optimal performance ratio. To get the effects of a negative

comment to be cancelled by encouragement is a 5:1 ratio. It takes 5 encouraging words to cancel out one negative thought. However, most situations measured had a ratio of 2:3. Only two encouragements to 3 negative words.

Re-Read: James 3:2-10, Matthew 15:17

Ask This:

- How easy is it to control the spread and impact a misspoken, or negative comment, can make?
- What does our harmful words reveal about our hearts?

DIGGING DEEPER

3-5
minutes

Leader Tip: *We want our groups to begin creating a habit of encouraging one another to spread the gospel and reflect Christ to our spheres of influence. This challenge needs to be held with some form of accountability. Have group members pick another member in the group to hold each other accountable to the challenge. Sometime this week, they should share their experience with the other member. There will be discussion next week in group to see how it went.*

Say This: Think of a person in your life that causes you great amounts of stress or anger. With your accountability partner, form a plan to encourage that person this week. This could be just a compliment about something they did, or something you like about them. This will start breaking down our hard hearts towards those that are far from God and begin making us more like Christ.

CLOSING THOUGHT

- **Leader Tip:** *Have group members reflect on what it would look like for God's people to have grace-filled lips within their broken world's context.*

3-5
minutes

STUDY

“Christ’s death was the full recompense of God on every hurt you’ve ever received from a fellow Christian. So, a grudge is against the cross.”

-John Piper