

Growth Group Homework

For the week of April 12, 2015

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Words are powerful and their impact can stick with us long after the actual words were said. Can you think of any conversations from the past that still have power in your life today?

2. When we get close to others we will occasionally hurt them or cause conflict. Sometimes we need to say, "I'm sorry." Other times we need to ask for forgiveness as well. What's the difference between these two responses? Can you think of a time when you had to apologize to someone and ask for forgiveness?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The Apostle Peter is a great case study on the use and abuse of words. Through his words he benefited many and, at other times, did some serious damage to himself and others. Read the following passages and make a note of any lessons you can learn from Peter's successes, failures and his teachings about our speech.

Matthew 16:13-23

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus Predicts His Death

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." [NIV]

Matthew 26:69-75

Peter Disowns Jesus

69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

70 But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

74 Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. [NIV]

Acts 2:36-41

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. [NIV]

1 Peter 3:8-18

Suffering for Doing Good

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For,

"Whoever would love life

and see good days

must keep their tongue from evil

and their lips from deceitful speech.

11 They must turn from evil and do good;

they must seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous

and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. [NIV]

How did Peter’s awareness of the impact of his words change over time? What hope does that give us? What do you think it takes to become truly aware of the impact of our words?

Jesus exposed Peter’s rough edges, restored him when he blew it and worked through him in many ways. When it comes to your speech and communication, are you aware of any rough edges or areas where you need to make some changes? What would they be?

2. Our words are often a reflection of what is going on inside of us. The Bible speaks of our words as being the overflow of our hearts and our minds. Likewise, our tongue can get our whole body in trouble if it’s not guarded well. What do these passages tell us about the relationship between our heart, mind, mouth and speech?

James 3:5-12

5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. [NIV]

Matthew 15:8-20

8 “These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
9 They worship me in vain;

their teachings are merely human rules.”

10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. 11 What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

12 Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

13 He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. 14 Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

15 Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

16 “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. 17 “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.” [NIV]

3. Every family will have its rough spots, problems or conflicts. God’s family is no exception. Pastor Chris pointed out that God cares deeply about how his kids treat each other when there are problems. Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. How are we to respond to a family member that blows it, admits it, and is open to change?

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Forgiveness for the Offender

5 If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. [NIV]

What plans might Satan have if we are unforgiving, unloving or harsh?

What part of this Scripture catches your attention the most in light of this week’s topic?

TAKING IT HOME

1. It has been said that showing “grace” with our words means using kinder and more helpful words than people might otherwise deserve. In other words, offering others the

same “grace” or unmerited favor that God gives us. Do you have any current relationships where you need to be more intentional about showing actual “grace” with your words?

What would that look like in a practical sense?

2. Looking back at the “Take Home Test” in this week’s sermon is there anything you want to change, add or focus on?

Prayer Requests:

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