

Journey CHURCH

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Session 6 Leader Guide

Leader Notes:

Words are powerful.

All verbal activity is potentially dangerous. Teaching is especially so, for the teacher of error has the potential not only to destroy the teacher himself but also harm the students.

Be careful who you listen to.

Be careful of stepping into space and pretending to be an expert when you're not.

Words matter. They change how we view things.

Christianity's foundation was not one of rhetoric but power.

Words reveal the progress of our faith.

The work of taming the tongue takes us right into the epicenter of all that is wrong with us, namely, our hearts.

What drives your mouth is your heart. What drives your heart is your identity.

What compels such vitriol coming out of our mouths is a misplaced identity in things that can be taken from us rather than our identity being rooted in the one thing that cannot be taken from us.

An identity rooted in Christ changes how you see the world.

If you build your identity on anything other than Jesus Christ, your words will be hateful or boastful or both.

Discussion:

1. Read James 3:3-8. What point did these illustrations make about our speech? Which illustration stood out most vividly to you? Why?
2. How have you personally felt the destructive power of words? When have you hurt someone with your words?

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3. How have you personally felt the power of words to bless? When have you comforted someone with your words?
4. Without thinking for very long, you can probably come up with several examples of things you wish you hadn't said. Likewise, you can probably remember other times when someone has encouraged you and given you strength. Our words have the power to bless and to curse. Read James 3:9-12. What point did these illustrations make about our speech?
5. How do words reveal the progress of our faith?
6. What remaining questions or comments do you have about the video teaching or discussion? What was challenging, convicting, encouraging, or timely for your current circumstances?

Optional:

We're going to take time to respond to these teachings from James with confession and prayer. First we'll consider what our words reveal about our hearts and confess that to one another. Then we'll pray for one another. We need to bring into the light what has been deep in our hearts and then encourage one another with the good news of the gospel and the healing truth of God's Word.

Divide into small groups of two to four people for confession and prayer. If space allows, small groups may want to gather in different areas of the room for a designated time before coming back together as a large group. Use the following questions to facilitate a time of confession.

7. What type of speech do you struggle with most (gossip, judgmental, sarcastic, jealous, prideful, etc.)?
8. Around what people or in what situations are you most likely to sin with your words?
9. How do your words reveal sin, fear, lack of faith, or other issues in your heart?
10. Ask one another: What do you see as a blind spot in the way I speak? In what ways am I prone to show sin without knowing it?
11. Pray specifically for each person in your small group in response to his or her confession. Return to the larger group for your usual time of prayer, sharing updates and new requests. Close in prayer for the group.