



**GROW**

**THE POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF SPEECH**



## Objectives

- To help Christians understand the importance of positive Biblical speech and the power of words.

## Guidelines To Use This Lesson

- Read through the whole lesson to gain a better understanding of the main points that could be drawn out and linked with the introduction.
- Read through the Bible verses within the lesson prior to teaching so as to be able to effectively teach your mentee.
- Share about your own experience in coming to a place of understanding of the power and importance of positive speech.
- Share any relevant testimonies.
- Consider illustrations that you could include in your sharing to help facilitate greater comprehension.
- Ask questions at different points of the lesson.

## The Power of Words

A man named Robert Schuller once told a story about a banker and a beggar. There was once a banker that would always toss a coin into the cup of a legless beggar who sat on the street outside the bank he worked in. Unlike most people though, the banker would always insist on having one of the pencils that the beggar had beside him.

“You are a merchant,” the banker would say, “and I always expect to receive good value from merchants I do business with”.

One day, the legless man stopped coming to his usual spot. Time passed and the banker eventually forgot about him, all until he walked into a certain public building. There in the concession stand he suddenly saw the beggar, only now he was obviously the owner of his own small business.

“I have always hoped you might come by someday,” the former beggar said. “You see, you were the one who kept telling me that I was a merchant. As time went by I eventually started to believe those words you said, and so I took up the courage to start selling pencils - lots of them. You gave me self-respect and caused me to look at myself differently. Your words enabled me to be where I am today”.

Have you ever considered the power of speech? Many of us can recall the joy of a compliment or kind word, but can also recall the sting of a hurtful or careless remark. Words are powerful! They have the power to build up and tear down. To encourage us greatly and even shaped the course of our lives or to bring us to the pits of despair.

In life we are always presented with a choice. To speak life or to speak death. To build up or to tear down. As the children of God we are called to become more and more like Jesus, and part of that involves speech. So, why does our speech matter to God? Why is it even important for us to transform the way we speak? Well let us take some time to dive in and explore this topic. Let us go deeper into the area of the importance of positive biblical speech.

# Speech and Its Importance to God

## 1. God works and connects through speech

The Earth was created by the spoken work of God (**Genesis 1:3, 6, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26**) and the Bible also says that God exalts His Word (**Psalms 138:2**).

*I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness, for you have so exalted your solemn decree that it surpasses your fame.*

**Psalms 138:2**

God wants to be intimately involved in each and everyone of our lives. But how? Well, one of the main ways is through speaking to us! Speech is important because it is a means through which God communicates to us. In Genesis, God spoke to Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses and many other people and just as God spoke back then, God wants to speak to us today. God wants to guide us and direct us in what He wants us to do in every aspect of our lives. It is up to us, though, to listen for His voice.

## 2. Speech carries weight

Our words have the power of life and death (**Proverbs 18:21; John 6:63; James 2:12**). The way we use them affects the lives of the people around us. Not only that, but it affects our own lives as well. Our speech can result in edification or destruction, life or death, victory or defeat, faith or doubt.

In a country church within a small village, there was once an altar boy serving the priest. One Sunday at Mass the boy accidentally dropped the cruet of wine. The village priest struck the altar boy sharply on the cheek and in a gruff voice shouted: "*Leave the altar and don't come back!*" Years later that boy became Tito the Communist leader.

On the other hand, in a cathedral in a large city, there was also an altar boy, this time serving a bishop. One Sunday at Mass he also accidentally dropped the cruet of wine. The bishop's reaction was something quite different though to that of the priest. With a warm twinkle in his eyes the bishop gently whispered to the boy: "*Someday you will be a priest*". That boy grew up to be Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

*With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbours,  
but through knowledge the righteous escape.*

**Proverbs 11:9**

*A fool's mouth lashes out with pride,  
but the lips of the wise protect them.*

**Proverbs 14:3**

*The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,  
but the speech of the upright rescues them.*

**Proverbs 12:6**

*Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk,  
and so the innocent escape trouble.*

**Proverbs 12:13**

*From the fruit of their lips people enjoy good things,  
but the unfaithful have an appetite for violence.  
Those who guard their lips preserve their lives,  
but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.*

**Proverbs 13:2-3**

*The soothing tongue is a tree of life,  
but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.*

**Proverbs 15:4**

*The tongue has the power of life and death,  
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

**Proverbs 18:21**

*The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they  
are full of the Spirit and life.*

**John 6:63**

Words are powerful! Think about how your own life has been shaped as a result of the words spoken to you. Many people suffer from low self-esteem as a result of insensitive remarks about their appearance, capabilities or achievements. Their lives are shaped by the impact of words from people that were important to them in their formative years. On the other hand, encouraging or life-giving words can inspire people to fulfil their God-given potential. Since words are powerful, we should be careful in what we say. We should take steps to speak life over others. One such way we can do so is by choosing to say meaningful things that can build up people. Our words should align with the heart of God!

God desires us to speak words that are in line with His heart. That are in line with the Word. Let us ask ourselves, do our words correlate to the teachings in the Bible (**1 Peter 4:11**)? Or, do we find that they are more like those who do not yet know God? What we say matters to God! One example of such can be seen in the book of Malachi. In Malachi we see of how the words of the Israelites, their irreverent and untrue statements about God, had wearied Him (**Malachi 2:17; 3:13**). What we say is important to God!

*If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

**1 Peter 4:11**

If we by now are starting to look at ourselves and are beginning to realise that this is an area that we need to grow in, do not despair. The Bible tells us that if our speech can be controlled.

*We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.*

**James 3:2**

So, how can we begin to control our speech? Well, we can begin by encouraging ourselves daily with truths from God's Word and being continually renewed in Him. The more we hide God's word in our hearts, the more we grow in Him the easier it will be to speak in line with His heart!

Let us seek to bring hope, life, restoration, comfort, warmth, friendliness and love into the lives of the people around us by the words we use. Rather than slipping into a pattern of giving shallow or insincere statements and of speaking words that do not line up with the Word of God, let us be ones that speak forth life.

### 3. Pure and positive words please the Lord

*The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked,  
but gracious words are pure in his sight.*

**Proverbs 15:26**

*The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,  
but the heart of the wicked is of little value.*

**Proverbs 10:20**

*Kings take pleasure in honest lips;  
they value the one who speaks what is right.*

**Proverbs 16:13**

*Pay attention and turn your ear to the sayings of the wise;  
apply your heart to what I teach,  
for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart  
and have all of them ready on your lips.*

**Proverbs 22:17-18**

## Speech Reveal Our Inner Thoughts and Feelings

Words are an indicator! Our speech reveals the condition of our hearts.

*The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,  
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.*

**Proverbs 10:11**

*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.  
Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.*

**Proverbs 4:23-24**

*Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

**James 3:10-12**

*You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.*

**Matthew 12:34-35**

The Bible warns us that “*If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless*” (**James 1:26**). We should be careful about the words we speak to make sure they honour God. Begin by observing yourself to see what you say when you are discouraged and down. Often at these times we will find that our words will be negative, despondent and filled with self-pity as we lose our focus on God. Our speech will reveal what we really believe.

## The Affects of Speech

When we take those steps to believe God's promises and in all that He has for us, when we those steps to allow God to transform us from the inside out, our speech will begin to reflect the heart of God more and more. We will begin to see our words align more with the purposes and promises of God. Take a hold of those promises and proclaim them!

What we say can effect the world around us! But how? Well, through declarations (**Mark 11:23, Matthew 17:20**) and coming to God in prayer (**James 4:2**)!

*"Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.*

**Mark 11:23**

*He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

**Matthew 17:20**

*You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.*

**James 4:2**

We also clearly see that our choice of words can affect our own lives as well.

*The mouths of fools are their undoing,  
and their lips are a snare to their very lives.*

**Proverbs 18:7**

*Those who guard their mouths and their tongues  
keep themselves from calamity.*

**Proverbs 21:23**

*For, "Whoever would love life and see good days  
must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.*

**1 Peter 3:10**

## Our Speech Has Power to Make Miracles Happen

In the beginning, God spoke a word and the whole world came into being. God also gives us creative power with our lips.

*He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

**Matthew 17:20**

When can speak God's Word into people's lives and cause His life, His power and His blessing to change the situation. We can create hope where there once was hopelessness. When people feel weak, we can remind them that Christ's strength is made perfect in our weakness (**2 Corinthians 12:9**). When people feel afraid of the future, we can reassure them that God's plans are good and that He will be there with us, no matter what happens (**Isaiah 43:1-2; Romans 8:35-37**).

## We All Will Give Account on the Judgement Day for Every Word We Have Spoken

Have you heard of the Oscar Awards, the Emmy Awards or the Nobel Prizes? In this world movies, television programmes and societal contributions are given awards when they are of a high quality. Everything that is produced in these areas are evaluated. Similarly, every word that is produced from our mouths will one day be evaluated by God. When we stand before Him on Judgement Day, we will have to give a give an account for all that was said.

*But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."*

**Matthew 12:36-37**

*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*

**Romans 2:1**

*Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.*

**1 Corinthians 4:5**

*But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

**Matthew 5:22**

*"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

**Matthew 7:1-2**

As such, what we say is important. And the most important words we will have to give an account for? Our 'yes' to Jesus! When we verbally acknowledge God and take that step to put our faith in Him, God acknowledges us as His own (**Matthew 10:32**). Let us not keep this 'yes' to ourselves though. Let us use our words to share with others so that they have the opportunity to give their 'yes' to Jesus as well, fulfilling the calling each and everyone of us all have (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

## Conclusion

*The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

**Proverbs 18:21**

How we speak matters to God! We are called to be ones who speak in line with the heart of God and will one day have to give an account for every word we have said. So, let us be ones who choose to speak life! After all, life and death are in the power of the tongue.

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## Reflection Station

1. Take some time to think about the words you speak. Do they tend to be more in line with the heart of God or do they tend to reflect more the society in which we live?

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2. Are there any areas of your speech that need a touch from God? That need to be aligned more with the Word? Take some time to seek God, writing down anything He brings up.

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